Kodansya Comics
★
KC191

あしたのジョー
19
KC
原作／高森朝雄
漫画／ちばてつや
★
350円
講談社

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★★★★★★★

あれくるう怪物ハリマオを血祭りにあげ、意気上るジョーがむかえる世界戦！　超人ホセ・メンドーサとの激闘を前に野性児ジョーの血は燃えたぎる！　巨編最高潮の堂々第十九弾！

〈装幀／水野石文〉

★★★★★★★

講談社
★￥350

〈著者近影〉

あしたのジョー⑲ ★KC191

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Kodansya Comics

TOMORROW'S JOE

Written by Asao Takamori (Kajiwara Ikki)
Drawn by Chiba Tetsuya

天涯の孤児矢吹　丈は、拳キチこと丹下段平に拾われてボクシング界に入り、今では〝殺し屋ジョー〟の異名を持つ人気ボクサーになっていた。

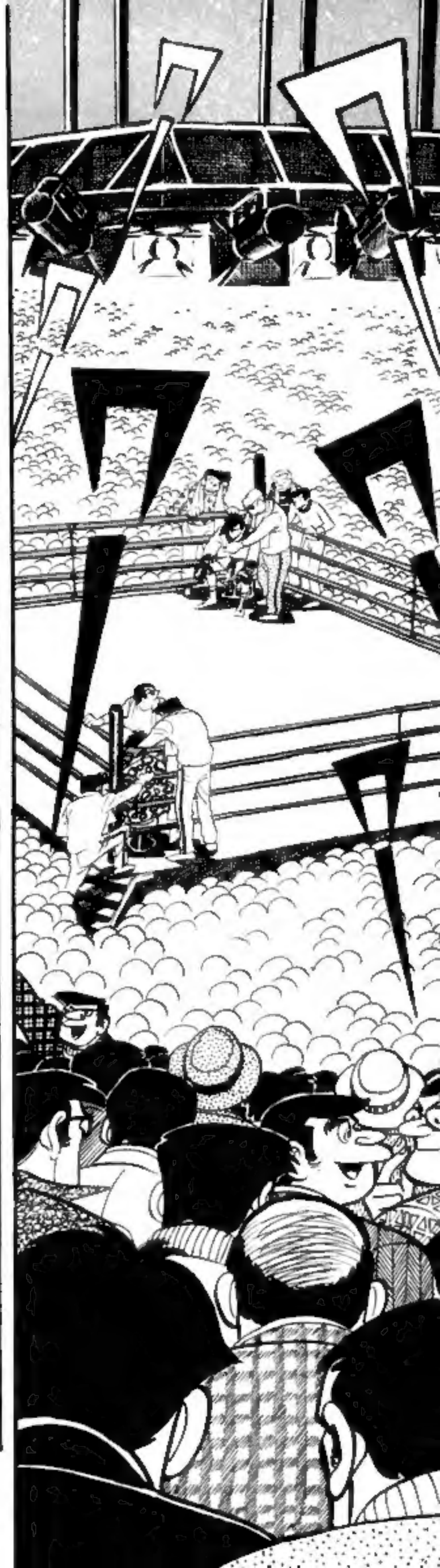
そして、宿敵力石　徹を倒し、世界六位のカーロス・リベラを倒し、さらに韓国の東洋チャンピオン金　竜飛に挑戦して見事に王座を獲得した。

残るは世界の星――。丈は巨人ホセ・メンドーサとの対戦に執念を燃やしていたが、おりから、メンドーサの試合興行権を持つ白木ジムは、マレーシアから怪物ハリマオを招き、丈の世界タイトル戦の前哨戦としてハリマオとの東洋タイトル戦を申し入れた。

〝怪物対殺し屋〟ふたりの対戦はファンの異様な興味と関心を集め、東京体育館で血戦の火ぶたが切られた……。

★前巻までのあらすじ★

GRRR...
GRAWRRR!



WHY'RE YOU SMIRKING WHEN THE MATCH IS ABOUT TO BEGIN...?

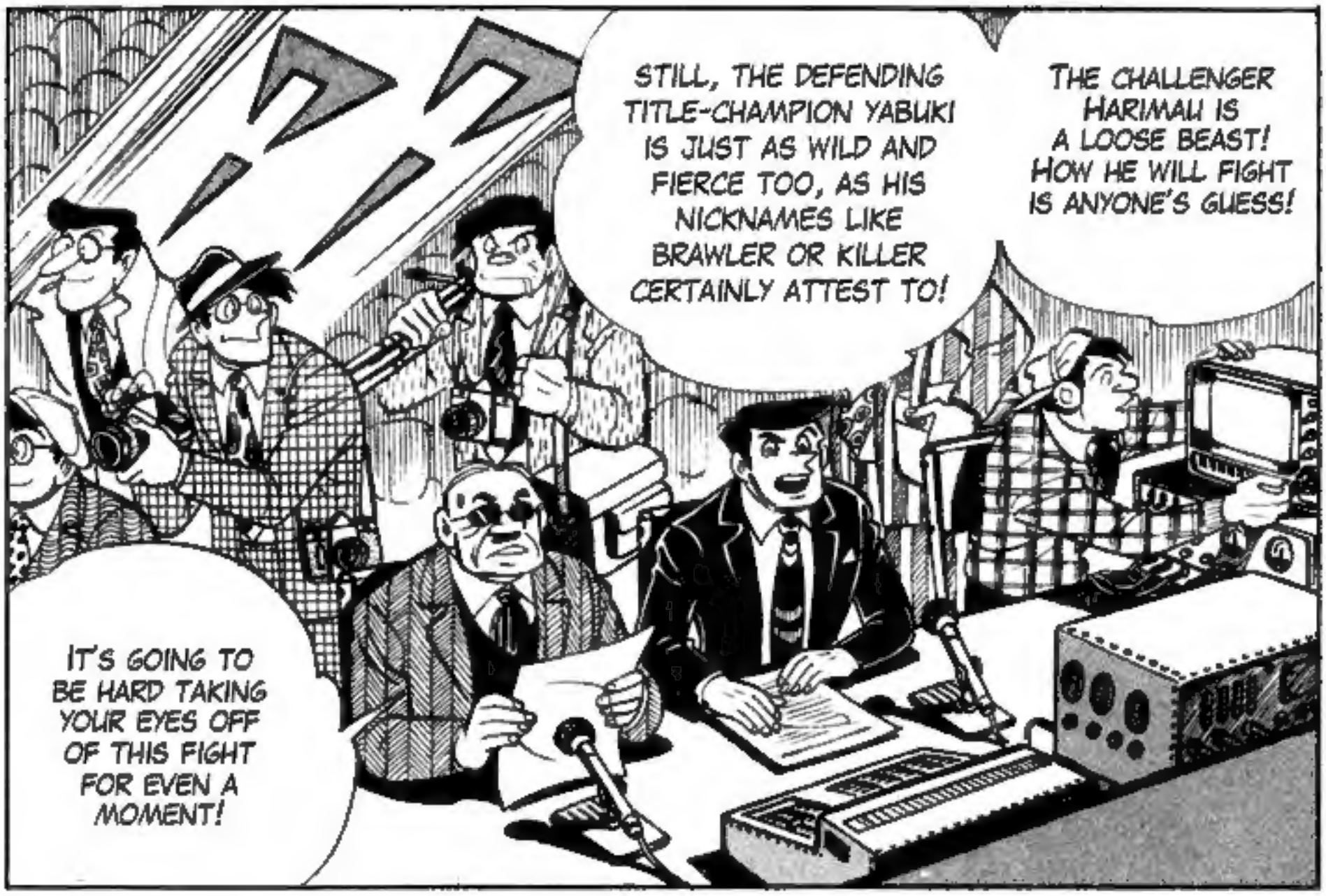
JOE... WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR MIND?

THE REF'S CALLING US, OLD MAN!

R- RIGHT...

IT'S FINALLY TIME TO START THE FIGHT!

THE FIGHT TONIGHT MAY JUST FEATURE THE ODDEST MATCHUP IN THE HISTORY OF BOXING IN JAPAN!


IT'S GOING TO BE HARD TAKING YOUR EYES OFF OF THIS FIGHT FOR EVEN A MOMENT!
STILL, THE DEFENDING TITLE-CHAMPION YABUKI IS JUST AS WILD AND FIERCE TOO, AS HIS NICKNAMES LIKE BRAWLER OR KILLER CERTAINLY ATTEST TO!
THE CHALLENGER HARIMAU IS A LOOSE BEAST! HOW HE WILL FIGHT IS ANYONE'S GUESS!

GOT THAT!?
IF YOU LOSE TO HARIMAO TONIGHT, YOU CAN KISS THAT WORLD-TITLE MATCH AGAINST MENDOZA GOOD-BYE!

HA HA...

HEY YABUKI! TONIGHT'S FIGHT ISN'T A BOXING MATCH, IT'S A DUEL!
YOU BETTER LIVE UP TO YOUR REPUTATION AS A BRAWLER!

WE'LL LOOK FORWARD TO IT!

SOUNDS GREAT!

I'LL MAKE SURE TO SEND THIS FILTHY MONKEY ON THE FIRST FLIGHT BACK TO MALAYSIA TONIGHT WITH HIS INSIDES STUFFED!

DON'T YOU WORRY!

J-JOE...

W-WATCH OUT...!

GRAWRRR!

AGH-

WAIT UNTIL THE BELL RINGS!

HARIMAU! NO!

YEAH, I KNOW, I KNOW.
DON'T FORGET YOU'RE FIGHTING-
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR OPPONENT WHEN ON THE RING!?

I'M NOT GONNA SHOW MY BACK TO HIM NO MATTER WHAT.
I'M FIGHTING AN ANIMAL WHO DOESN'T CARE ABOUT RULES OR THE BELL.

SOUNDS LIKE THE FIGHT'S ABOUT TO BEGIN...
WISH WE COULD GO SEE TOO... DAMN IT!

HEY, WAIT!

HEY.

I...

WHERE'S YOUR TICKET?

HUH?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

I CALLED UNCROWNED EMPEROR...

I STRONG BOXER

I... SO STRONG AT BOXING.

LOOK, YOU CAN'T GO IN WITHOUT A TICKET. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, GO BUY ONE AT THE TICKET BOOTH.

I DON'T KNOW. I CAN BARELY HEAR HIS VOICE.

WHAT'S HE MUMBLING ABOUT?

HUH?

TO EVEN WORLD CHAMP...

WON'T LOSE...

NO...

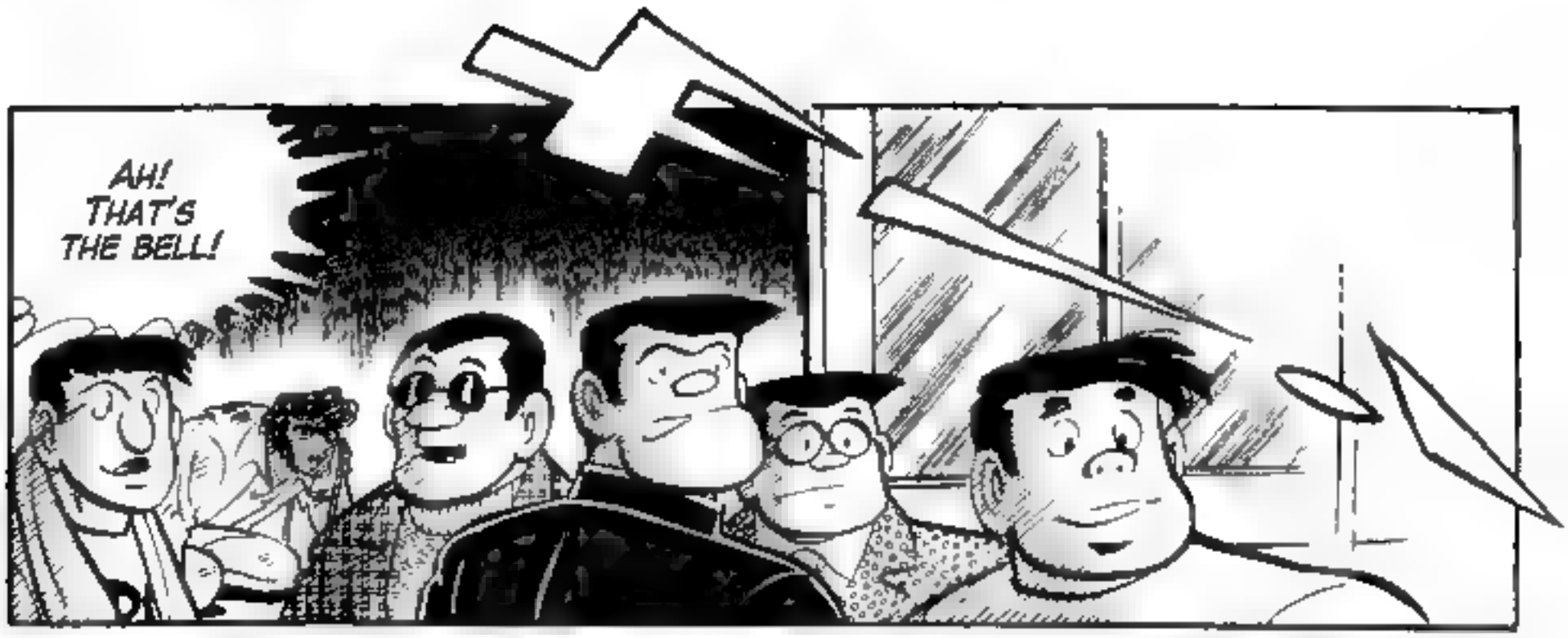
NOW BEAT IT!

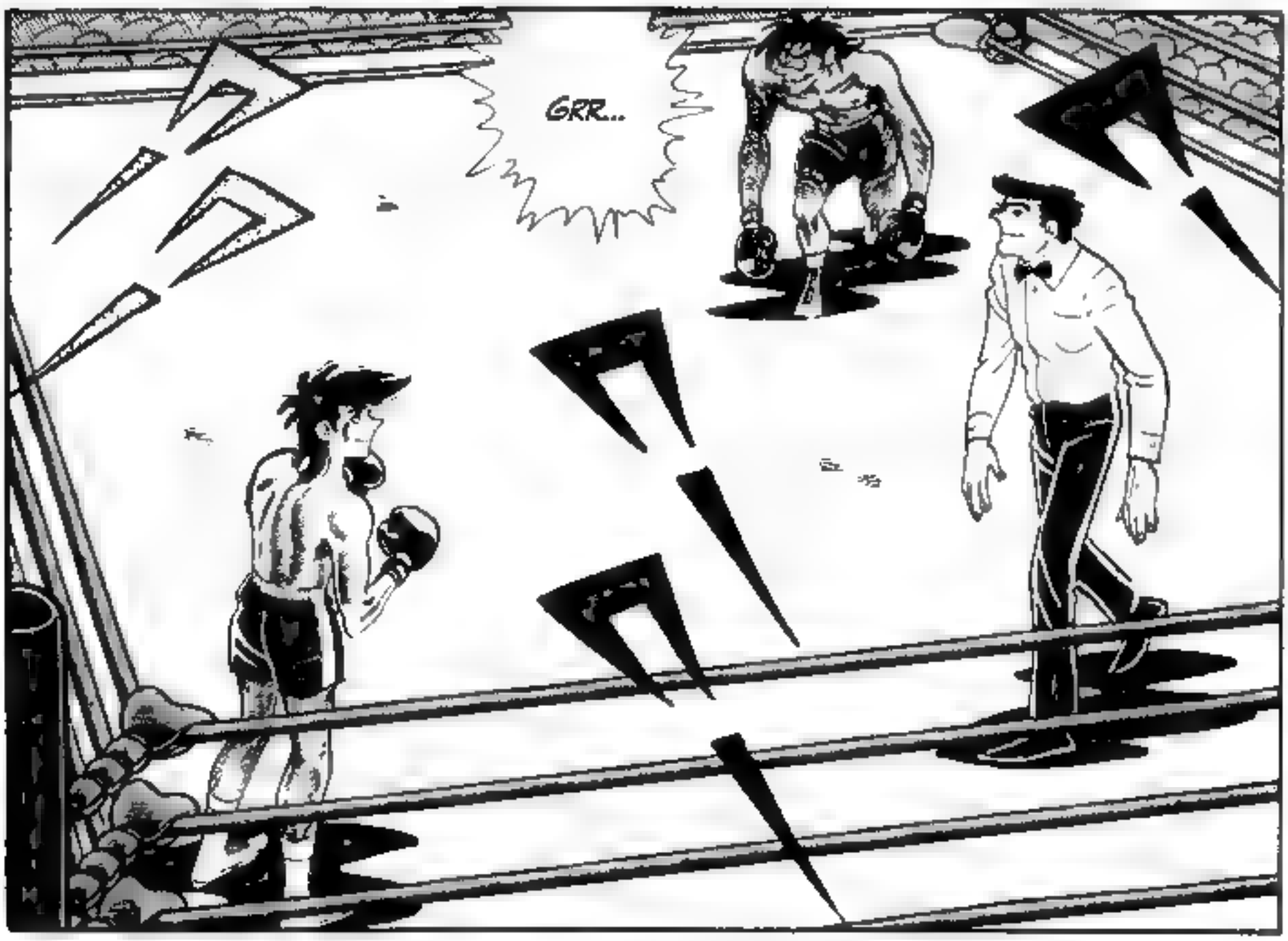
CAN'T LET SOME HOBO LIKE YOU ENTER AND INCONVENIENCE THE AUDIENCE.

DOESN'T HIS FACE SORTA SEEM FAMILIAR?

HEY...

HM... YOU KNOW, I WAS JUST THINKING THAT MYSELF...


AH! THAT'S THE BELL!


GRR...

HEH, HERE HE COMES!

GRRR...!

JUST LIKE AN ANIMAL UNLEASHED FROM HIS CAGE...

GRAWRRR!

GRAWRR!

C'MON THEN!

HEH.

SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

GOOD.

THAT WAY,

I WON'T HAVE TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT GOING ALL-OUT!

HA!

TAKE THAT!

GAHH!

AHHHH! YABUKI CATCHES HARIMAU ON THE ROPES EARLY ON!

HE GOES ALL-OUT ON THE OFFENSIVE!

HOW'S THIS, HARIMAU!?

HERE, HAVE ANOTHER!

GRAWRRR!

GRR...

AREN'CHA GONNA USE YOUR ROPE JUMPING TRICK TONIGHT?

HEH HEH. WHAT'S WRONG?

ALRIGHT, YABUKI!

JUST LIKE THAT!

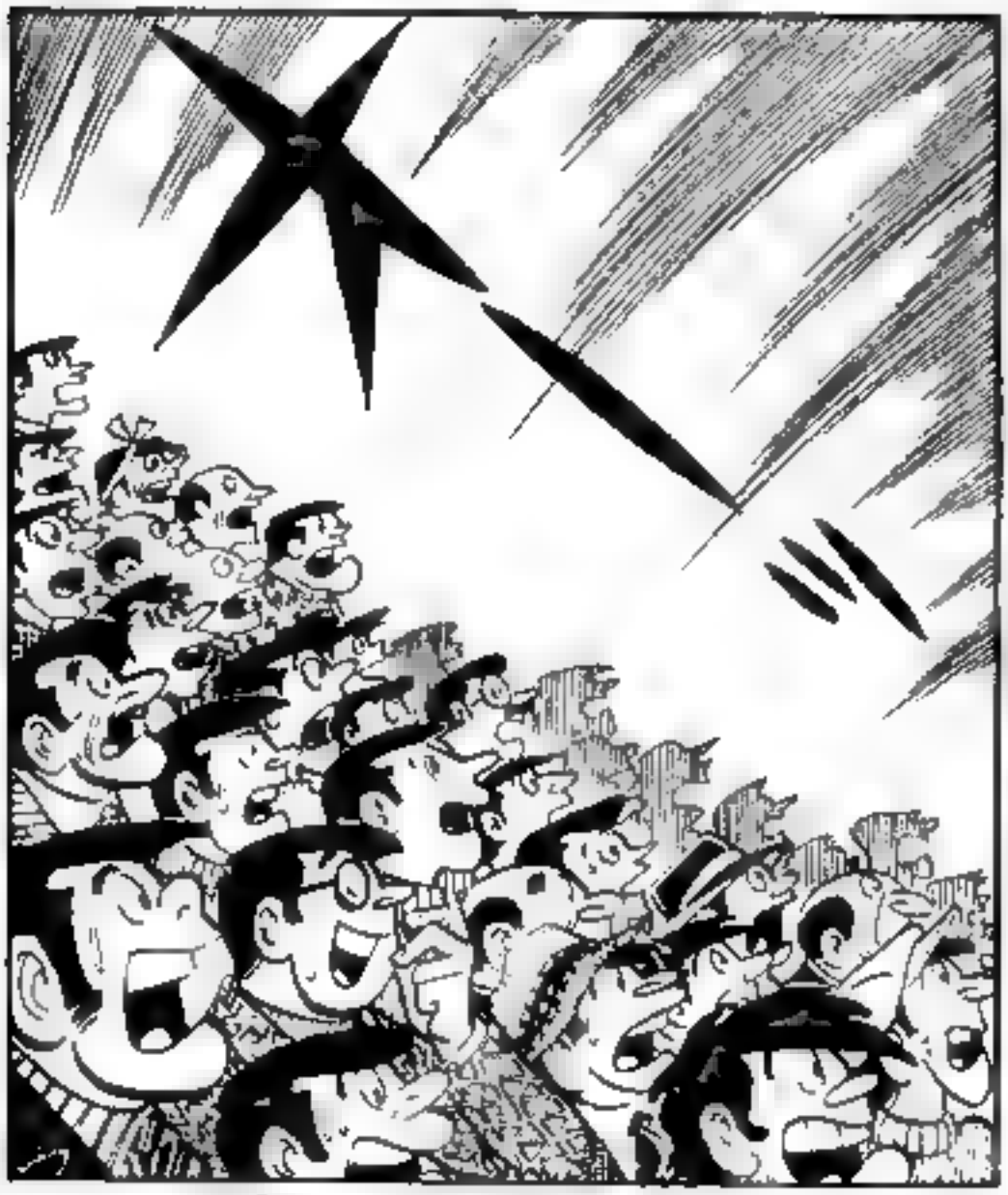
KEEP THOSE PUNCHES COMING!

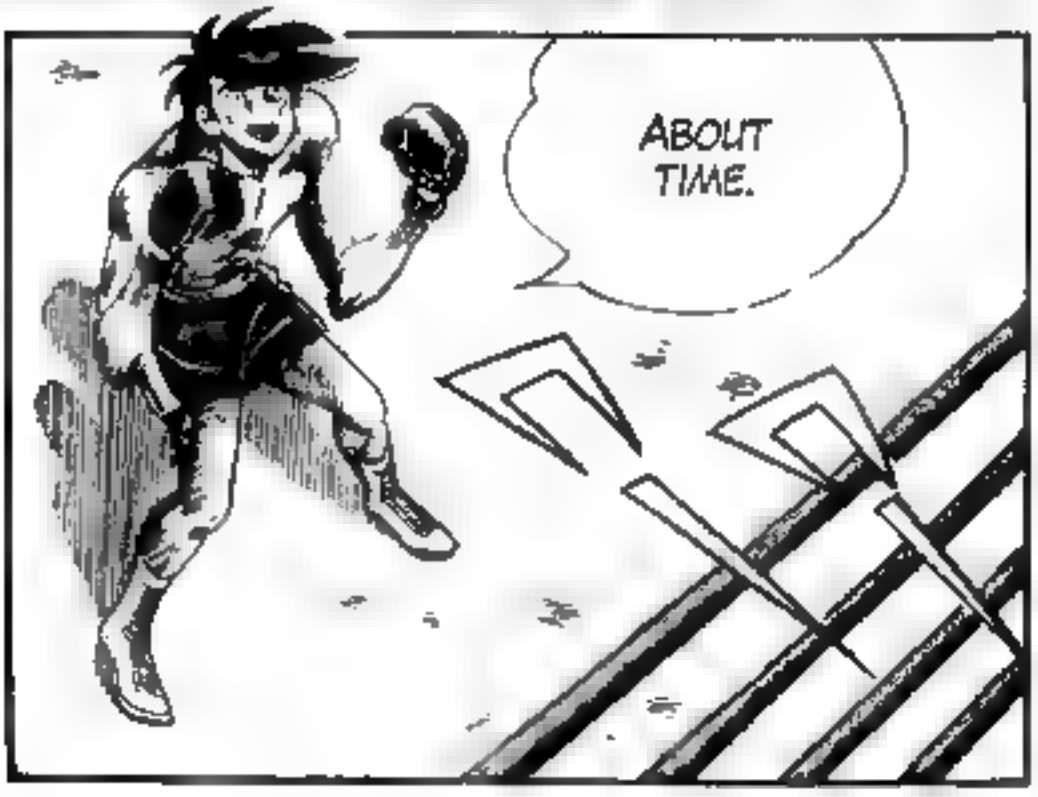
LIKE WHEN YOU FOUGHT TAKIGAWA!?

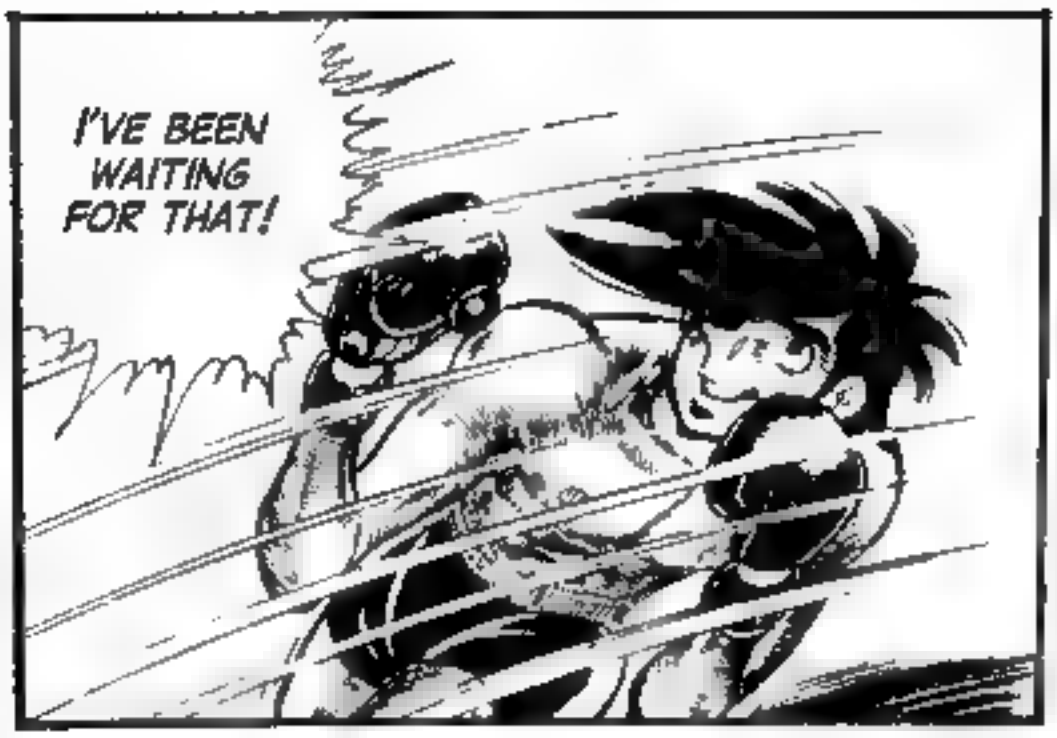
WELL? AREN'T YOU GONNA JUMP AROUND ON THE ROPES,

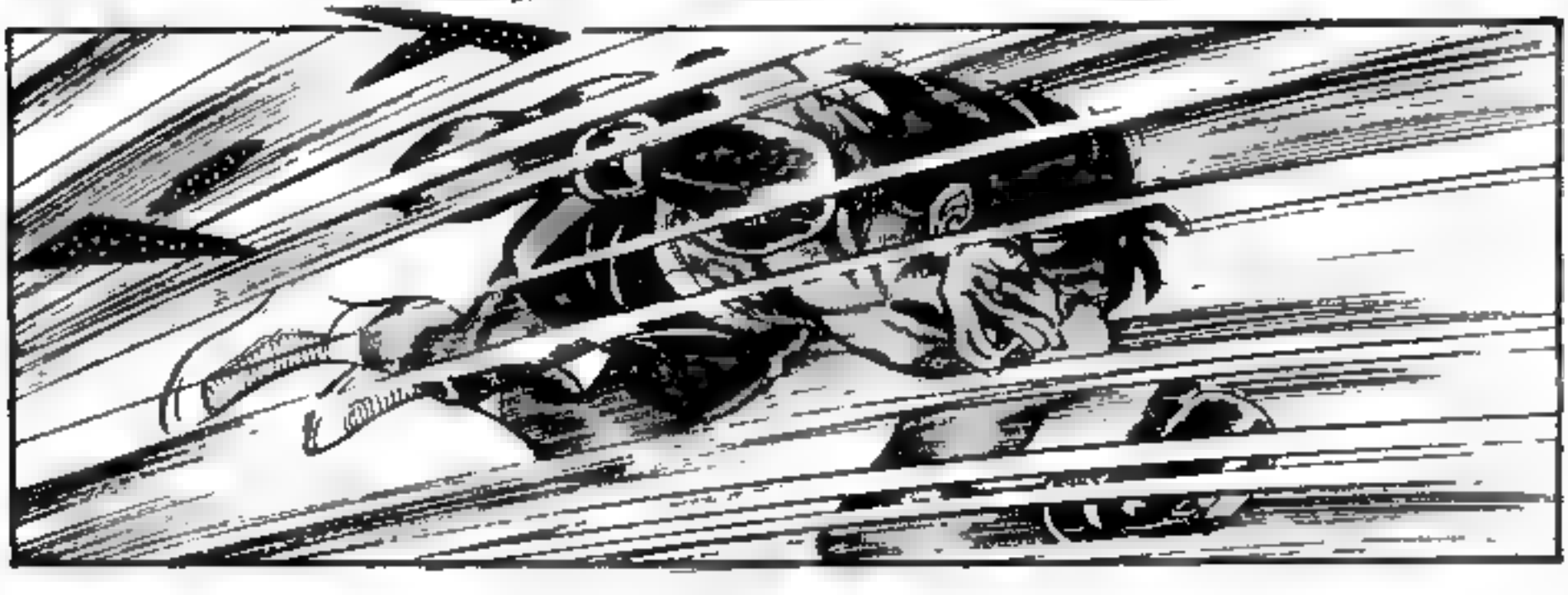
RAHHH!

AHHH!



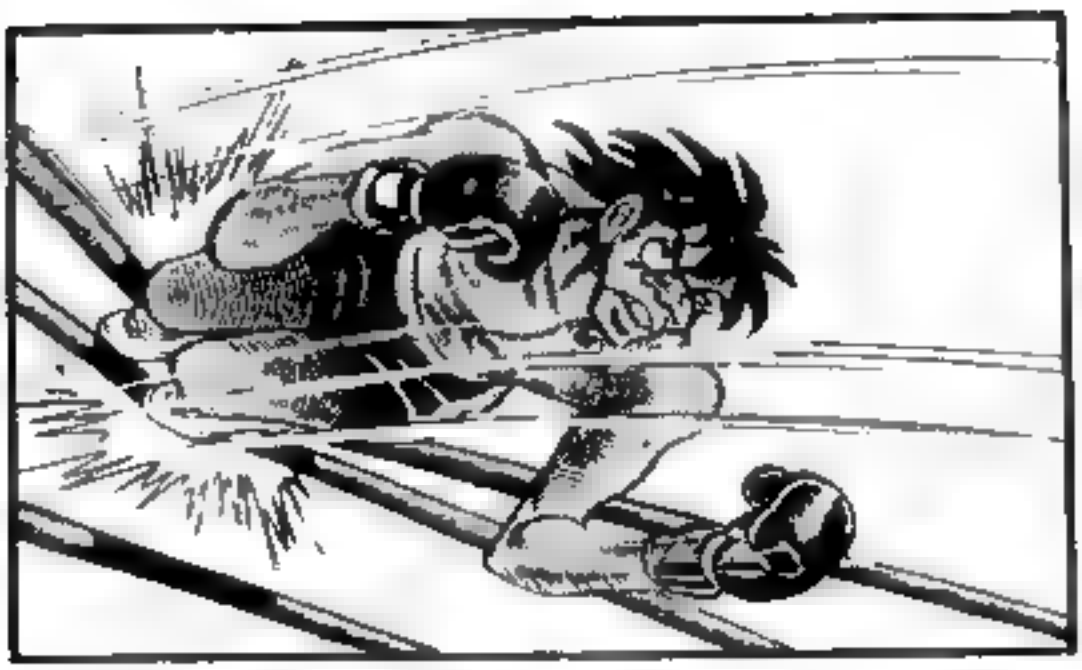

ABOUT TIME.

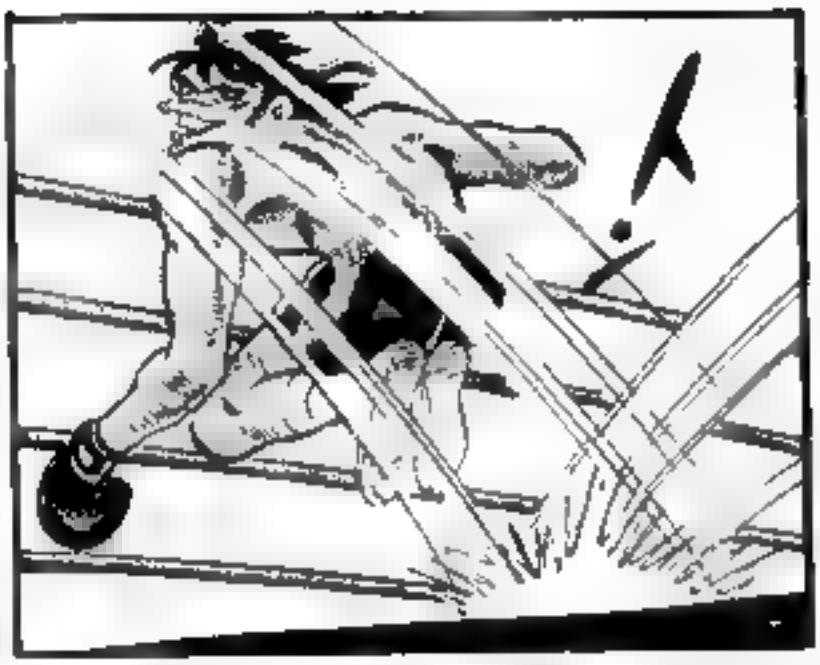

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THAT!

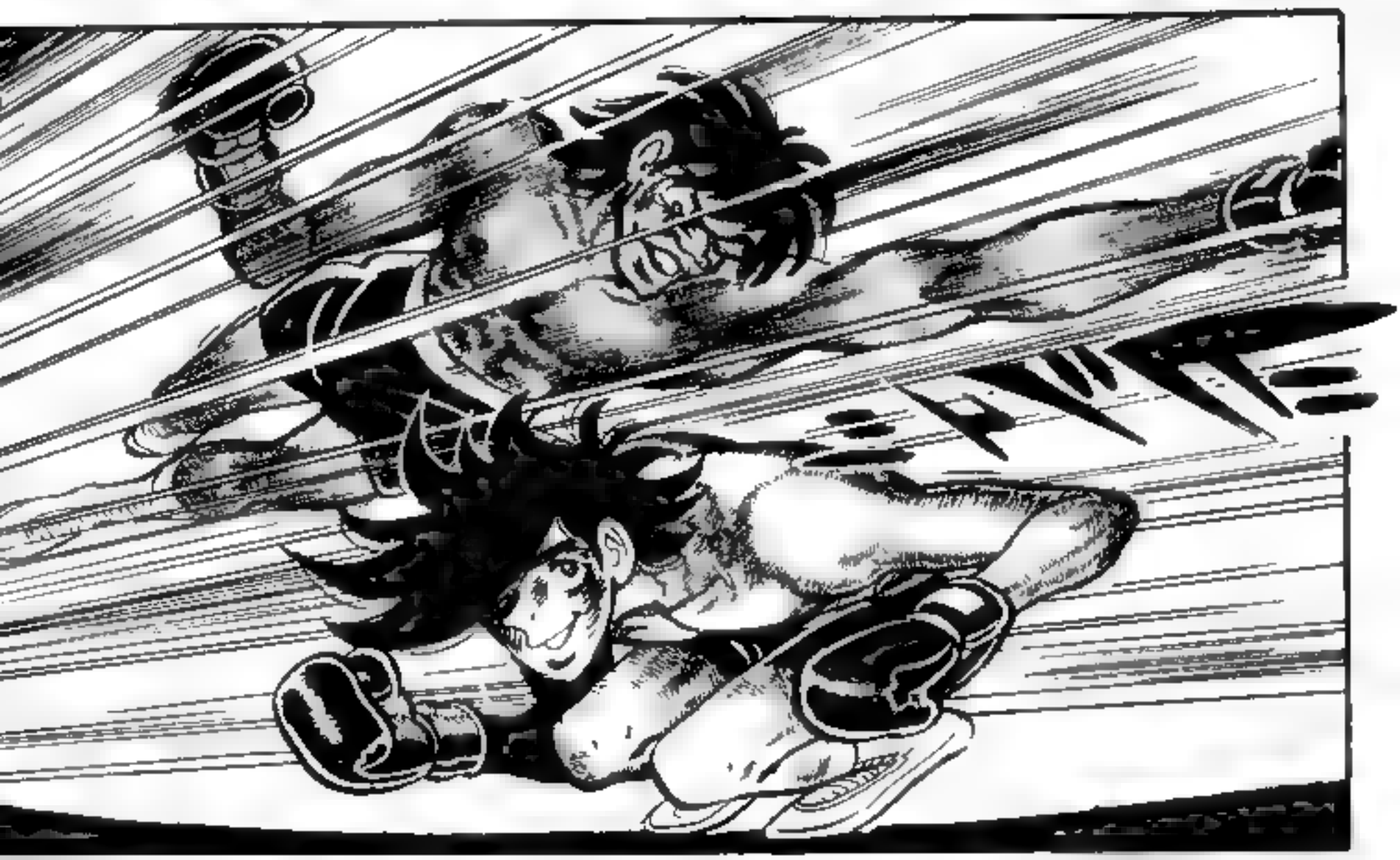


HEH.

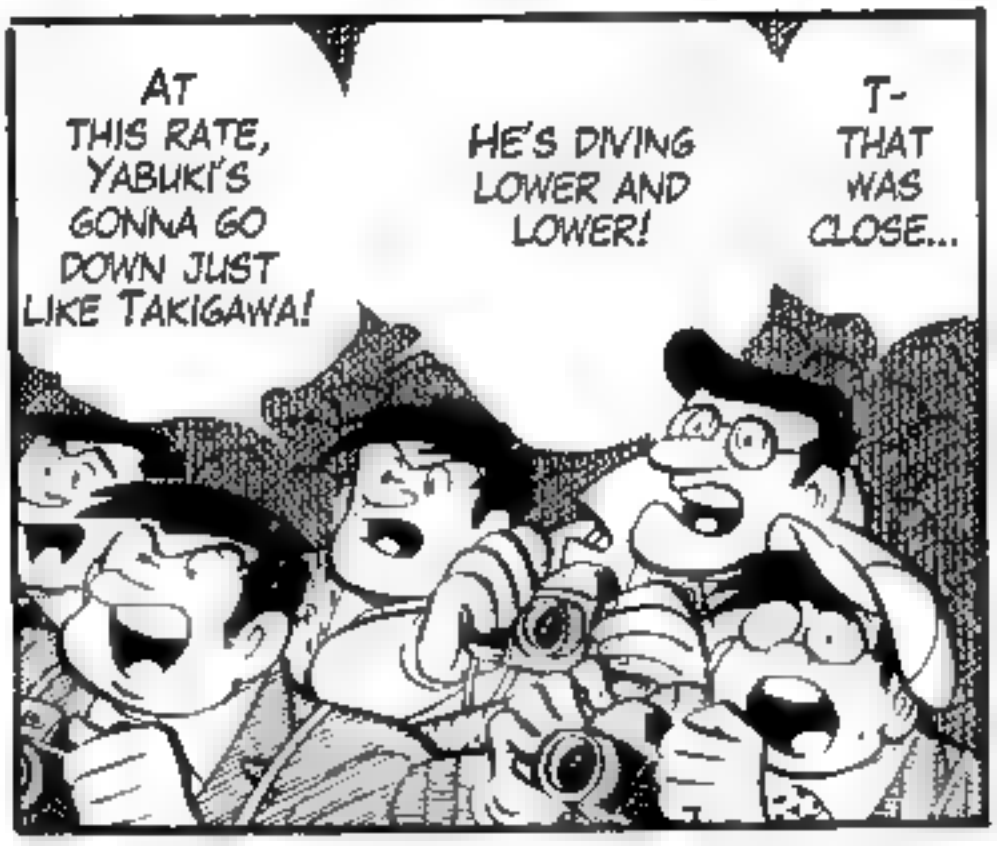
J-
JOE!

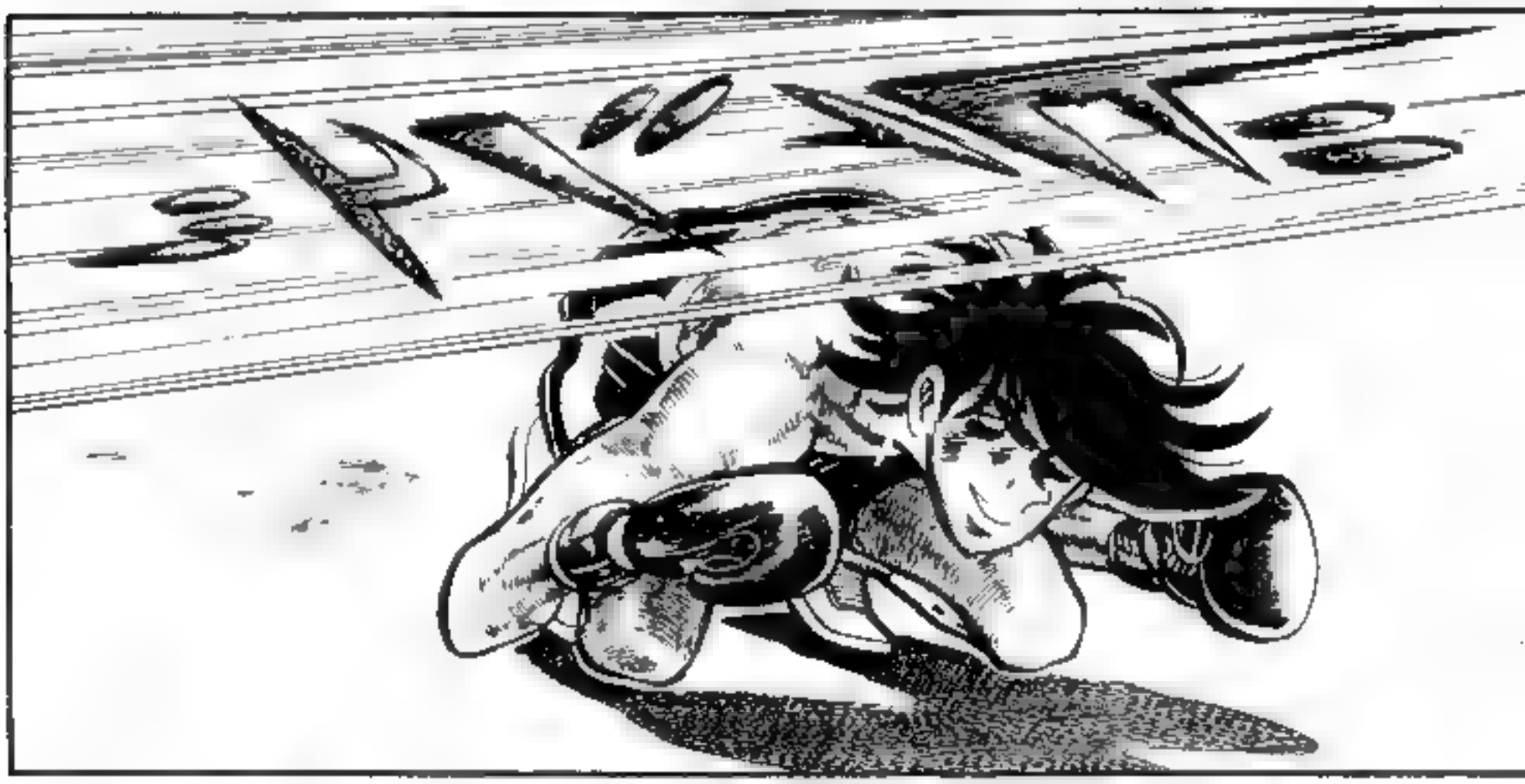






YOU'RE GONNA BE KILLED!
GET AWAY!
JOE! DON'T STAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RING!


AT THIS RATE, YABUKI'S GONNA GO DOWN JUST LIKE TAKIGAWA!
HE'S DIVING LOWER AND LOWER!
T- THAT WAS CLOSE...



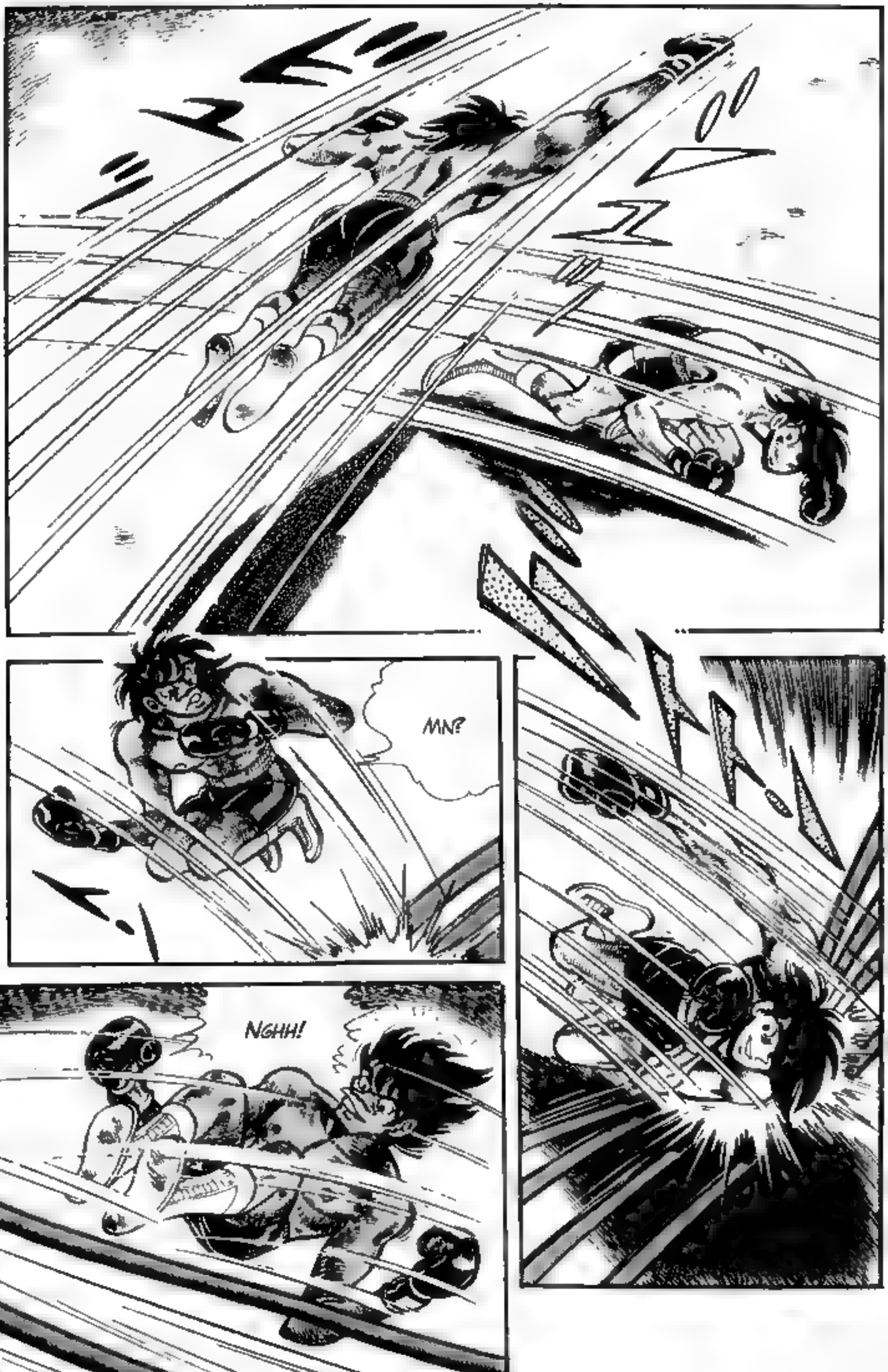
HEH
HEH

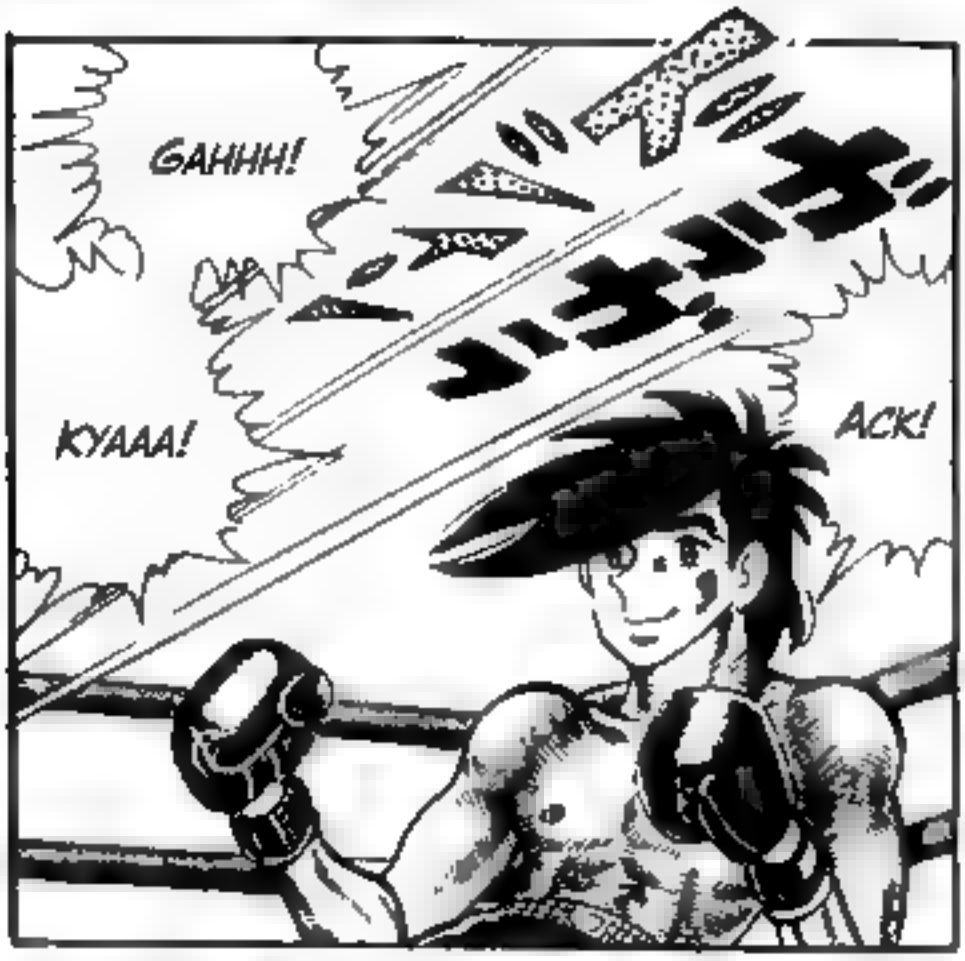
DID YOU LOSE YOUR MIND, JOE...?
Y-YOU FOOL... WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO DO?

NOW...!

AGHHH! HARIMAU'S AERIAL ATTACKS ARE JUST BARELY GRAZING YABUKI'S HEAD!

JUST LIKE THE PENDULUM OF DEATH INCHING CLOSER AND CLOSER TOWARDS THE PROTAGONIST IN EDGAR ALLEN POE'S "PIT AND THE PENDULUM, SO TOO IS HARIMAU AS HE DESCENDS UPON HIS TARGET YABUKI...!


MN?
NGHH!


GAHHH!
KYAAA!
ACK!

OHH!
AGHH!

By pushing against one side, the shock reverberates to the other side, causing Harimau to lose his footing and fall off!

Since all the ropes on one side are connected to the remaining 3 sides of the ring,

Incredible!

An unexpected but brilliant tactic from Yabuki!

Grrrawrr!

T-
That's a slip! Hurry up and get back on the ring!

And on the other hand, since Yabuki Joe didn't directly push Harimau off the rings with his body, his actions cannot be called illegal!

Since Harimau fell from the ring due to the ropes wobbling underneath him, the ref can only call it a slip-down.

GRR...

GRAWRR!

ALRIGHT...

HAHA...
THE GOOD THING ABOUT THIS TACTIC IS THAT I CAN MAKE YOU FALL OFF THE RINGS IN A PERFECTLY LEGAL WAY.

SHOW ME YOUR GLOVES FIRST!

RESUME THE FIGHT!

MY MY... HE LOOKS PISSED OFF.

GRR...

GRAWRR!

AGAINST A WILD BEAST LIKE HIM, IT'S BEST TO ANGER HIM UNTIL HE BLINDLY CHARGES AT YOU.

THEN I CAN EXPECT HIS ATTACKS,

AND RESPOND APPROPRIATELY...

IN A CALM, LOGICAL WAY!

HARIMAU'S NO PROBLEM AT ALL FOR HIM!

WHOA, LOOK AT HIM GO!

HE'S THE PACIFIC CHAMP FOR A REASON, ALRIGHT!

YOU CAUGHT HIM...

I NEVER EXPECTED THE FIGHT WOULD TURN OUT THIS SMOOTHLY.

GOOD. AS LONG AS HE CAN KEEP THIS UP, THIS FIRST ROUND'S IN HIS BAG.

THERE'S STILL ABOUT 40 SECONDS LEFT.

WHAT'S THE TIME?

THE TIME?

BUT IT'D BE BEST...
TO GIVE THAT A REST!

TO STILL STAND UP...
WELL, WELL... AREN'T YOU TRYING PRETTY HARD,
ドカ
ドカ

UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET EVEN MORE INJURED!

JUST WHAT COULD HIS SECRET WEAPON BE...?

MS. SHIRAKI'S PREDICTION ABOUT THAT BIGGEST PIECE OF CHOCOLATE SAVED FOR LAST RINGS IN MY MIND RIGHT NOW.

S-STILL...

IT SEEMS THE MATCH IS ALREADY ALMOST DECIDED!

H-HARIMAU'S TURNED INTO YABUKI'S PUNCHING BAG!

HARIMAU'S IN MAJOR TROUBLE!

MNNF.

A...
AHH!

HM?

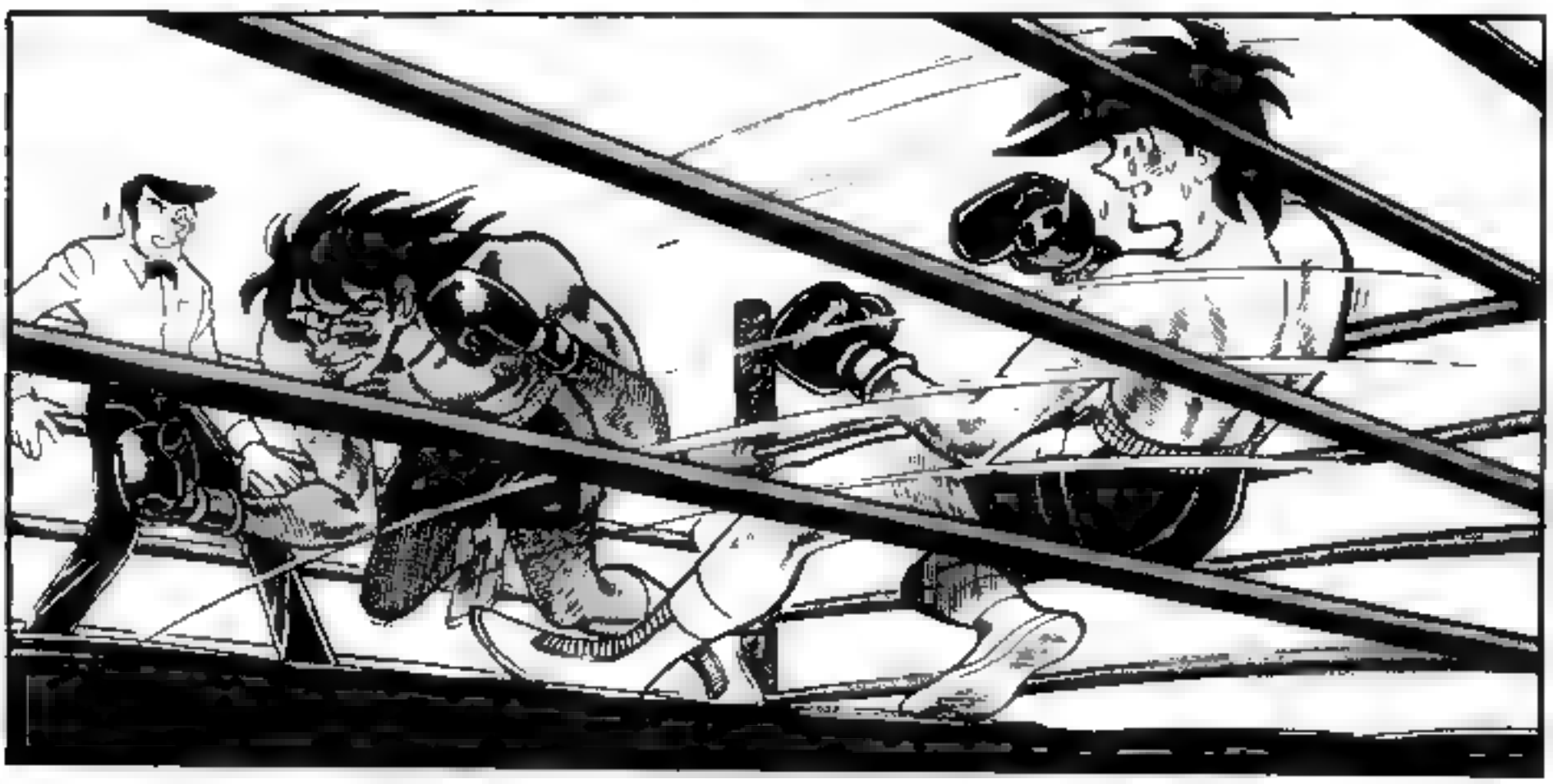
WHY'D YOU STOP, JOE!?
WHAT'S WRONG!?

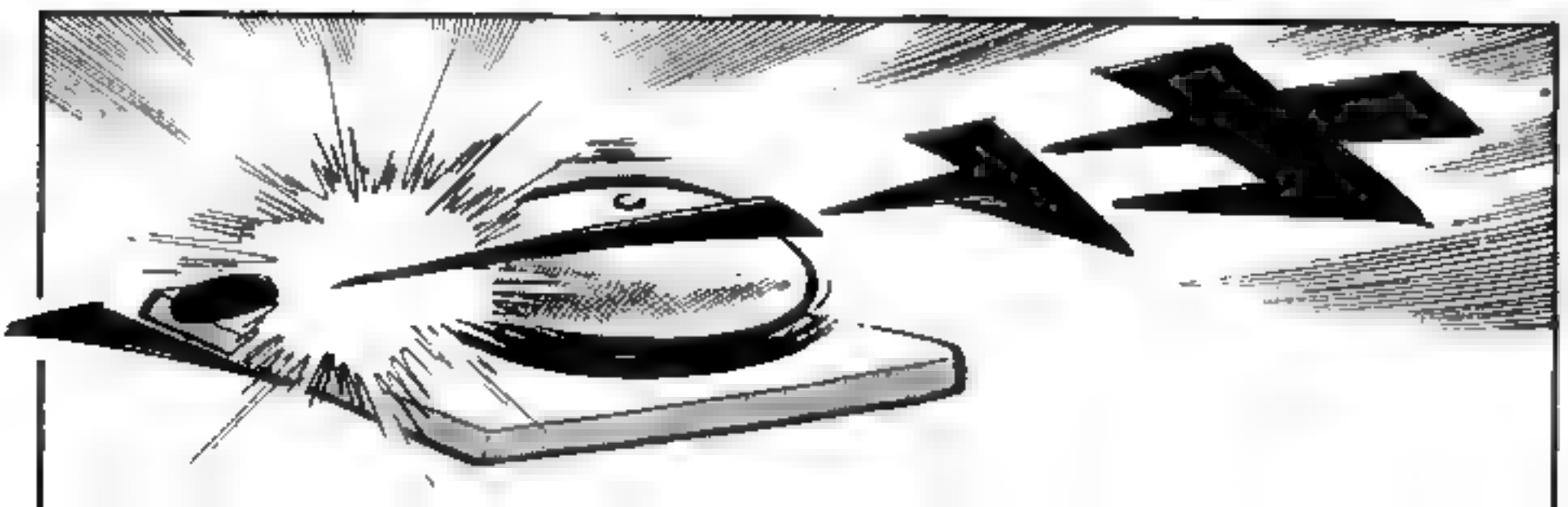
W-WHA...?

. . . .

YOU SHOULD BE GOING FOR THE FINISH!
YOU HAD HIM CORNERED! WHY'D YOU LET HIM GO!?
FINISH HIM OFF IN ROUND ONE!

GRR...





HARIMAU'S AERIAL ATTACKS WERE NULLIFIED BY YABUKI'S BRILLIANT ROPE-BOUNCING TACTIC BUT...

IT'S THE END OF ROUND ONE!

Y-YES...

AHH! WAY TO GET US ALL EXCITED OVER NOTHING, YOU IDIOT!

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT HE'D GO FOR THE FINISH, I CAN'T BELIEVE HE LET UP LIKE THAT!

I GET THE FEELING THAT THERE'S STILL A LOT MORE TO COME IN THIS FIGHT.

YABUKI SHOWS A PANIC-STRICKEN LOOK AT THE LAST MOMENT AS HARIMAU OMINOUSLY STEPS FORWARD TO ATTACK...

W-WHAT'S WRONG, JOE?

AH-

BAM!

BUT IT COOLED IN AN INSTANT.

IT WAS HOT...

W-WHAT!?

YOU'RE BREAKING OUT IN COLD SWEATS...

THE SWEAT FROM A BOXER PHYSICALLY EXERTING HIMSELF SHOULD BE HOT, NOT COLD...

THAT... HE WAS ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING DEADLY.

THAT'S WHAT MY INSTINCTS SAID...

HE WAS TRYING TO PULL OFF SOMETHING JUST AS THE BELL WAS ABOUT TO RING.

THAT GUY...

NO, I'M NOT!

I MEAN...

M-MAYBE YOU'RE OVERTHINKING THINGS, JOE.

THAT NOBODY ELSE KNOWS ABOUT.

HE STILL HAS A CARD UP HIS SLEEVE,

IT'S BEEN DORMANT AS OF LATE BUT... I CAN FEEL MY WILD INSTINCTS STARTING TO WAKE UP AGAIN.

I USED TO BE AN ANIMAL JUST AS WILD AS HIM.

SHIRAKI

I... IN ANY CASE, THIS FIGHT'S GONNA GO NOWHERE IF YOU CONTINUE TO LET UP LIKE JUST NOW.

THE NEXT TIME YOU CATCH HIM ON THE ROPES, PUMMEL HIM SO FAST HE WON'T EVEN HAVE A MOMENT TO THINK ABOUT PULLING WHATEVER CARD HE HAS LEFT.

IS THAT HOW IT IS?

UPON HEARING ONE OF HIS KIND...

HAHA... A WILD BEAST TAMED BY HUMANS WAKES UP,

THAT'S YOUR BEST BET!

SO COME AT HIM STRONG!

GRR...

AGHH-

GRAWRRR...

J-
JOE...

AH!
NOT
AGAIN...

SERIOUSLY?

HUFF

HUFF

GRR...

WHAT'RE YOU SHUFFLING YOUR FEET AROUND FOR WHEN YOU'VE GOT YOUR OPPONENT ALL FIGURED OUT!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YA DOING, YABUKI!?

GO OUT ON THE ATTACK LIKE IN ROUND ONE!

GRAWRR...

GRR...

DAMN IT!

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...

HUFF

HUFF

ATTACK HIM, JOE!

ATTACK!

GODDAMN IT, YOU RETARD!

IS NOW TIMIDLY DISTANCING HIMSELF FROM HARIMAU, DESPITE PUMMELING HIM ALL THROUGHOUT IN ROUND ONE!

YABUKI JOE, WHO NEVER RAN AWAY FROM HIS OPPONENT NO MATTER HOW STRONG HE WAS,

THIS FIGHT'S TAKEN AN UNEXPECTED TURN.

I-IT SEEMS ...

YOU HAVE TO FIGHT!

!!

YABUKI!

IF YOU KEEP RUNNING AWAY, I'M DEDUCTING A POINT!

START ATTACKING NOW!

GRRR...!

GRAWRR!

AGH-

D-DAMN IT...

OOF

AGHHH!

GRR...

THAT'S A SLIP-DOWN!

S-STOP!

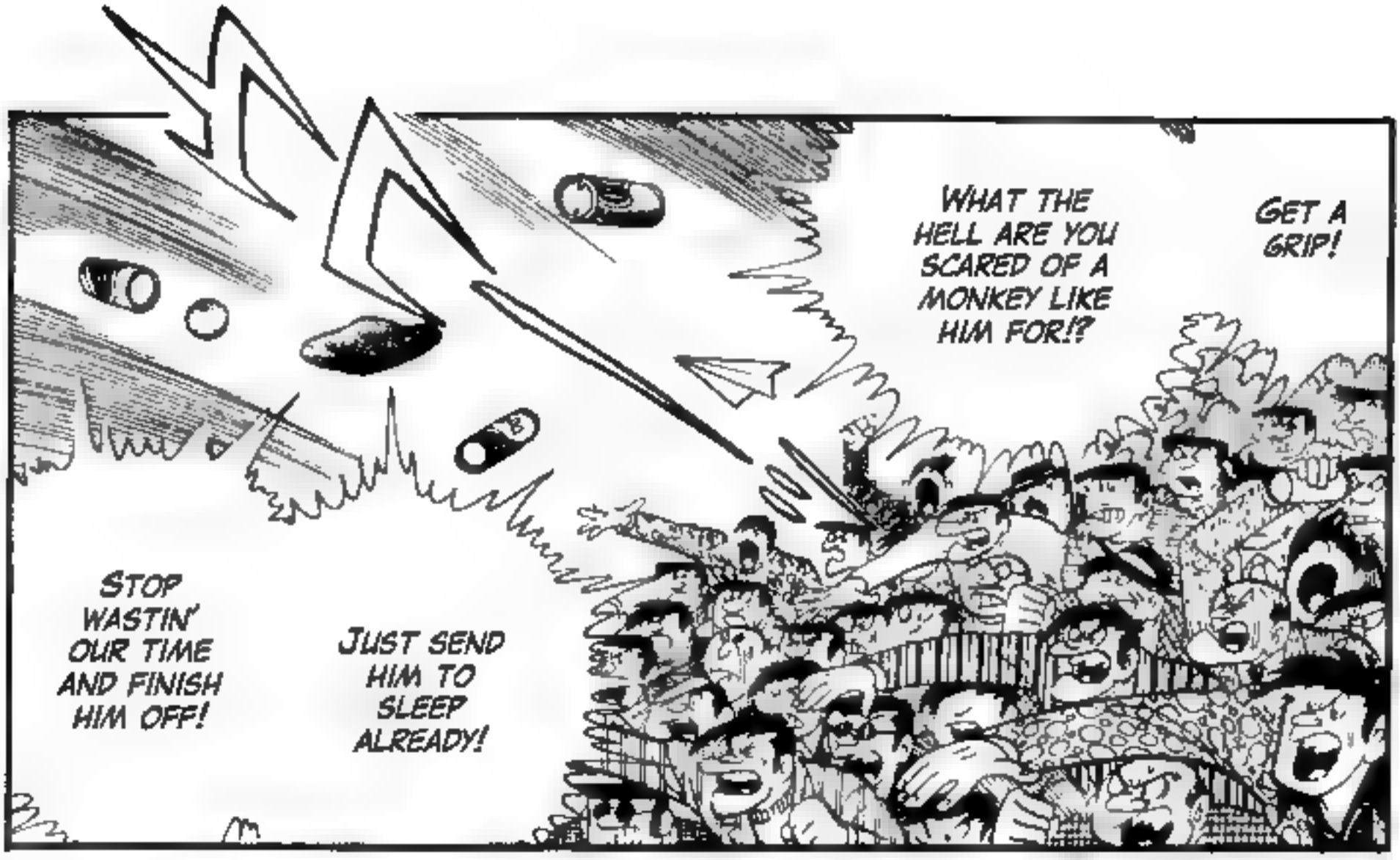
GRAWRRR!

DO YOU EVEN WANT TO FIGHT!?

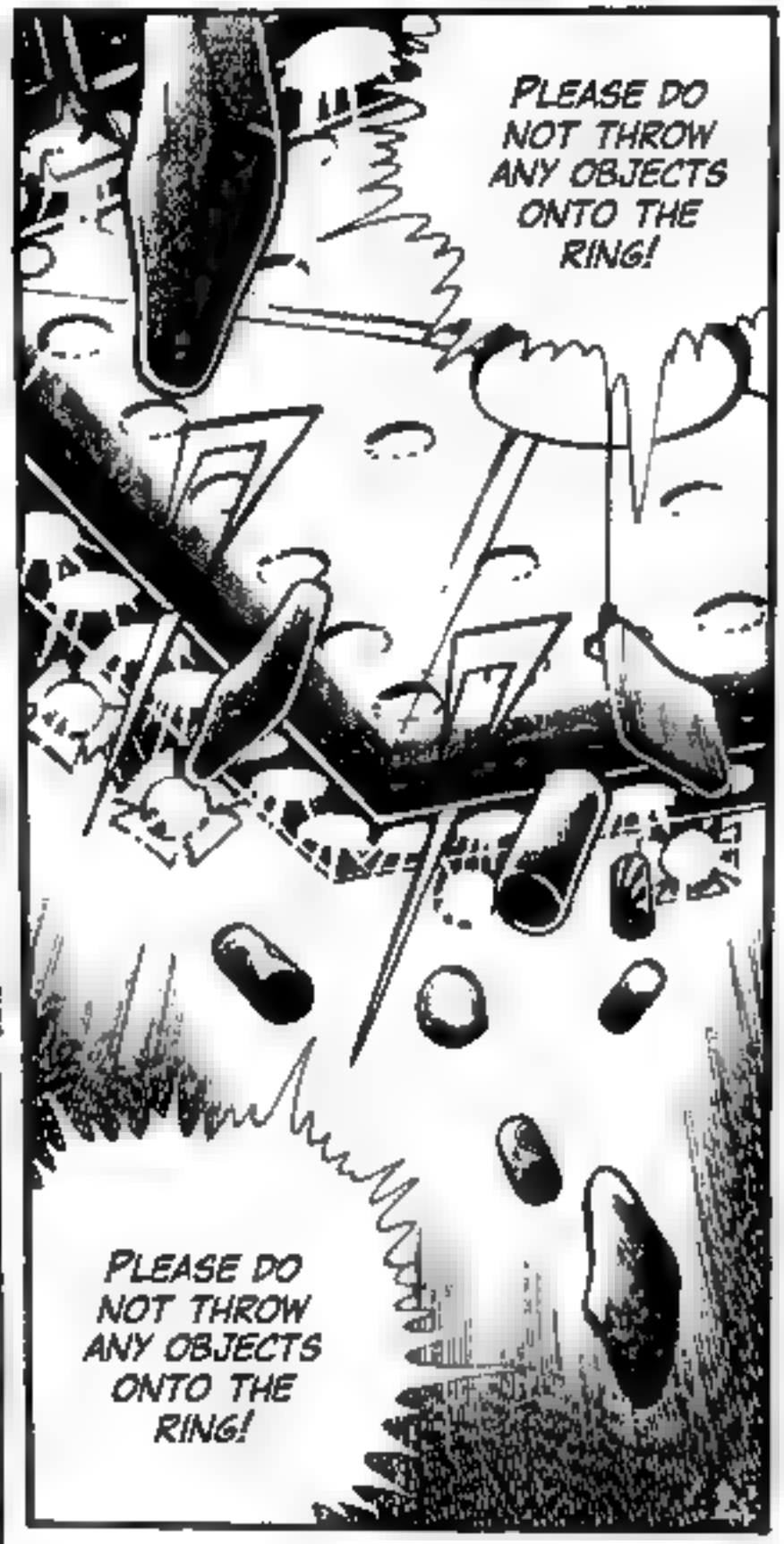
I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU!

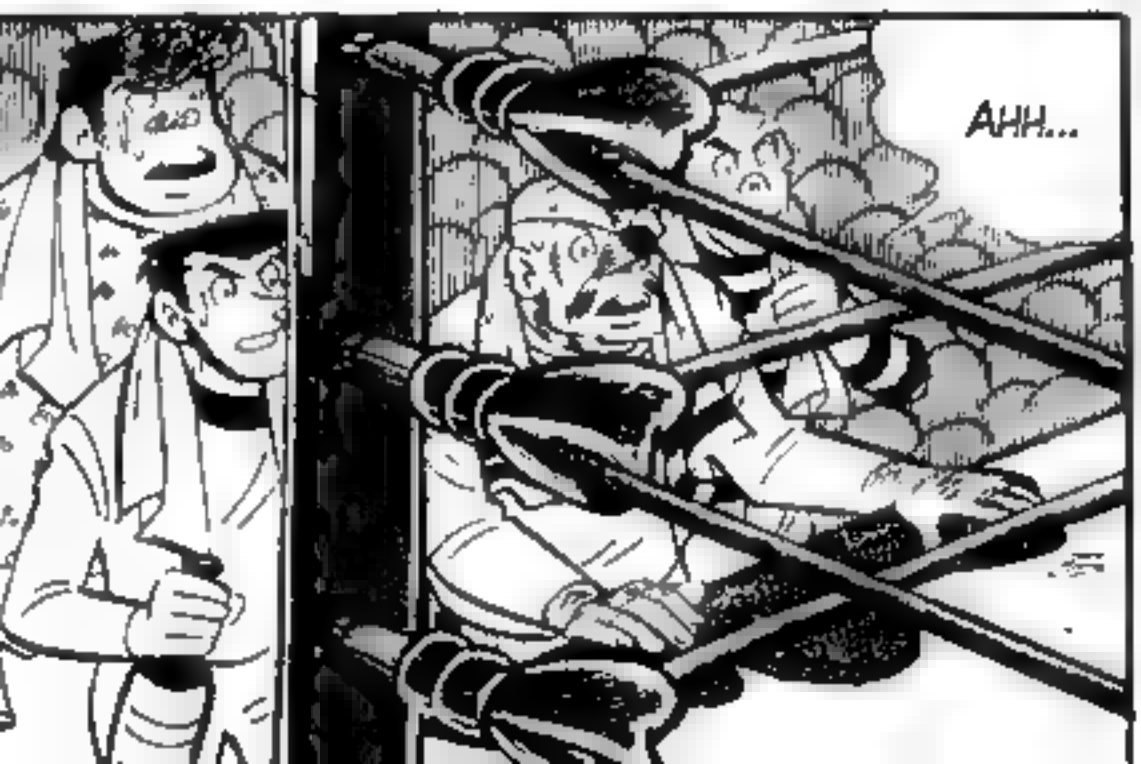
THIS IS SO PATHETIC I CAN'T EVEN WATCH!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH!


WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SCARED OF A MONKEY LIKE HIM FOR!?
GET A GRIP!
STOP WASTIN' OUR TIME AND FINISH HIM OFF!
JUST SEND HIM TO SLEEP ALREADY!

DEDUCTING ONE POINT!
DEDUCTING ONE POINT!


PLEASE DO NOT THROW ANY OBJECTS ONTO THE RING!
PLEASE DO NOT THROW ANY OBJECTS ONTO THE RING!


AHH...

GRRR..!

HUFF

HUFF

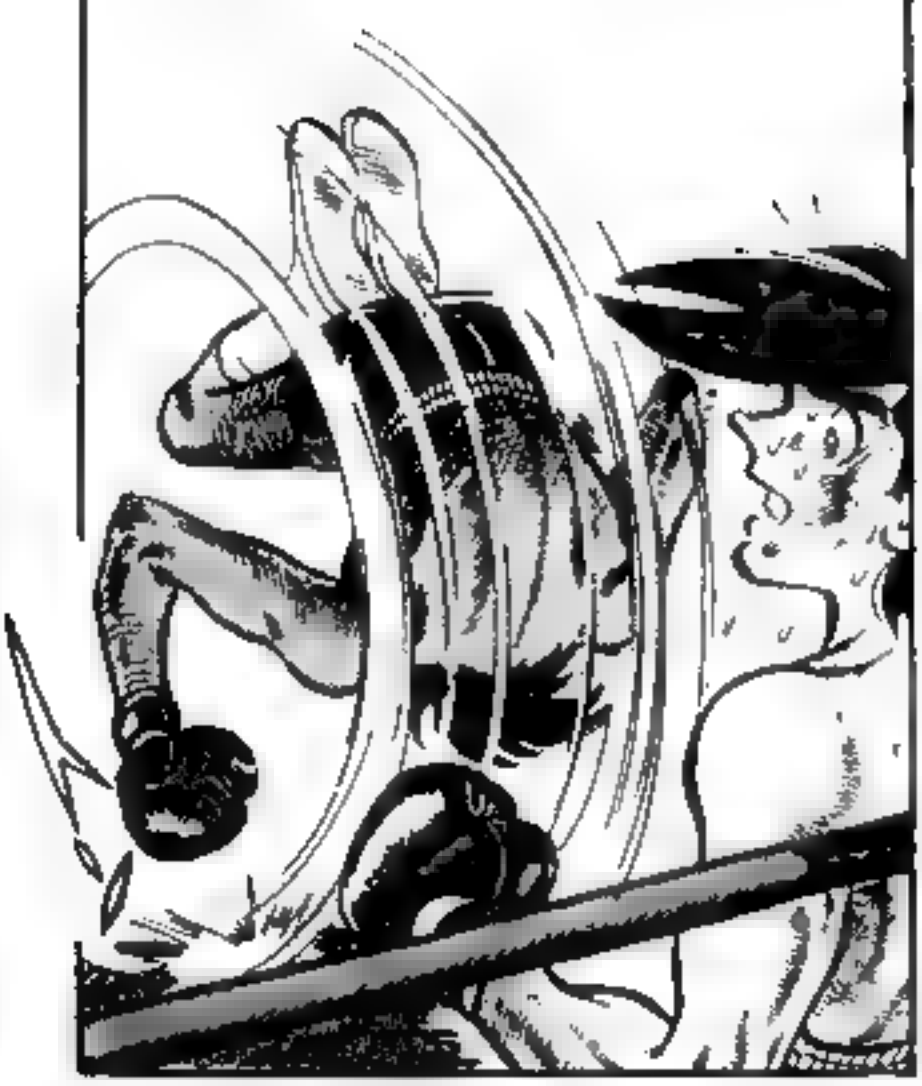
RESUME FIGHT!

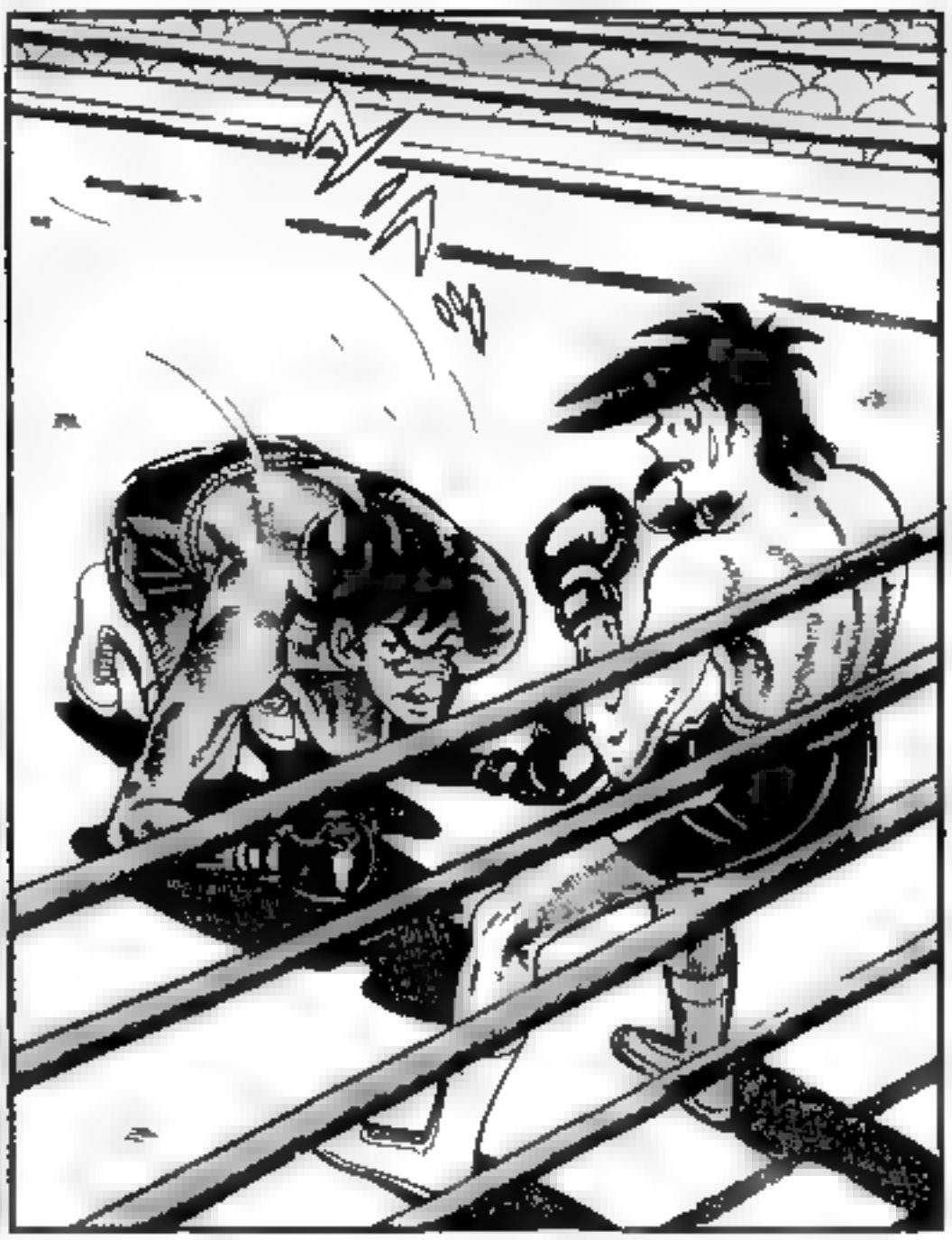
GRR...

AH-

GRRR..!

RAWRR!





RAWRRR!

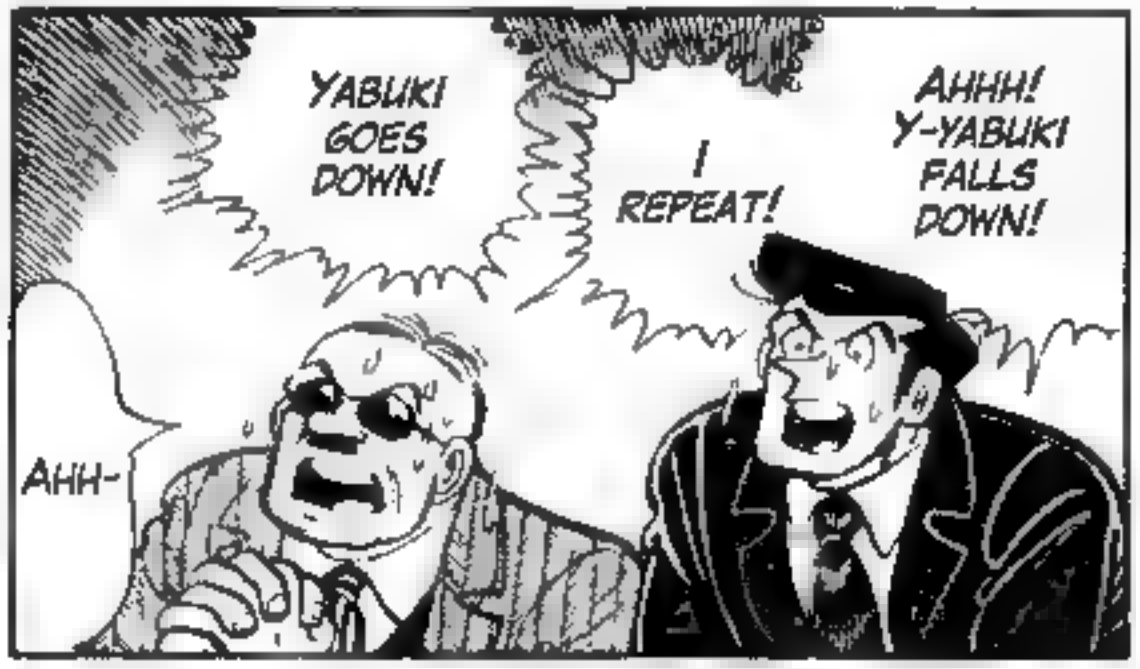
WHAAA!?

AHHH!

OOP

KI——!!

JOEEE!


YABUKI GOES DOWN!
I REPEAT!
AHHH! Y-YABUKI FALLS DOWN!
AHH-

KI KI KI KI!

T-THAT'S A DOWN!

GO BACK TO YOUR CORNER!

WHAT DID HARIMAU DO JUST NOW...?

W- WHAT HAPPENED?

I THINK I SAW HIM DO A FLIP AFTER DRIVING YABUKI BACK TO THE ROPES, BUT...

I...

5!

4!

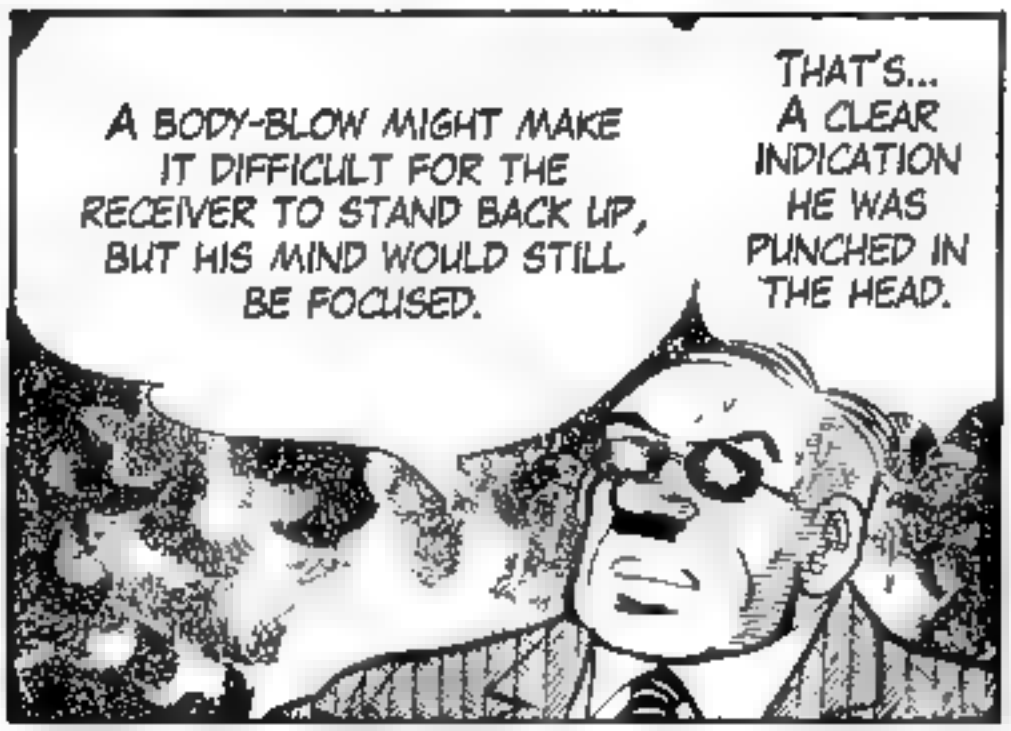
3!

UGH...

7!

6!

BUT HIS EYES ARE STILL CLEARLY IN A DAZE RIGHT NOW!
Y-YABUKI JUST BARELY MANAGES TO STAND UP...

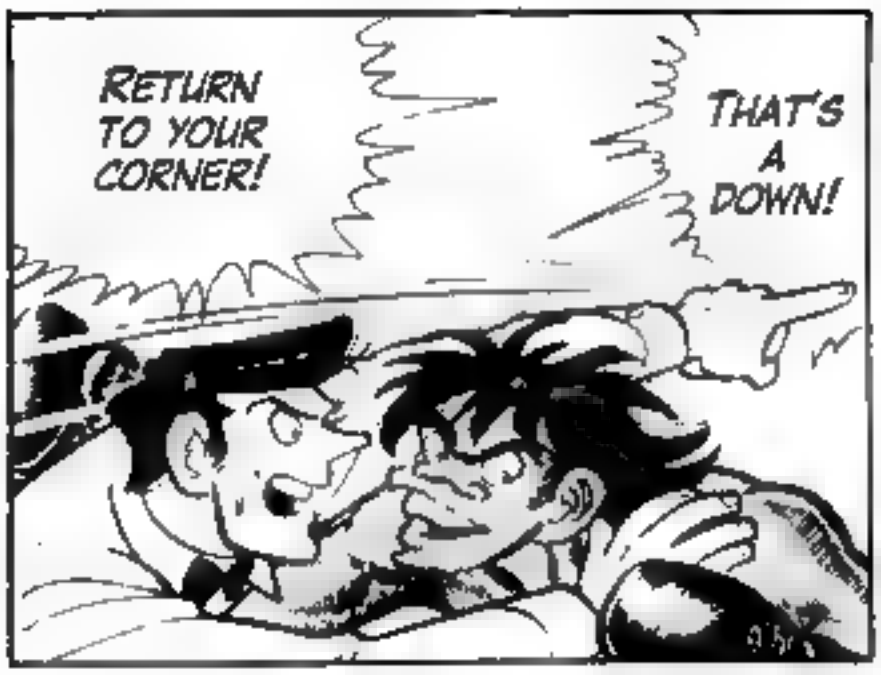

A BODY-BLOW MIGHT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE RECEIVER TO STAND BACK UP, BUT HIS MIND WOULD STILL BE FOCUSED.
THAT'S... A CLEAR INDICATION HE WAS PUNCHED IN THE HEAD.

YOUR INSTINCTS WERE RIGHT...
JOE...

GRAWRR!

FIGHT!

KI!
KIKI!


RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!
THAT'S A DOWN!

S-STOP!
I SAID STOP!

THE REF CALLS A ROPE-DOWN AFTER SEEING YABUKI GETTING SENSELESSLY PUMMELED ON THE ROPES!
IT'S A ROPE-DOWN THIS TIME!

LET ME SEE YOUR EYES FOR A SECOND...

A-ARE YOU REALLY FINE TO FIGHT?

5!

6!

7!

I... I'M READY...

ド!

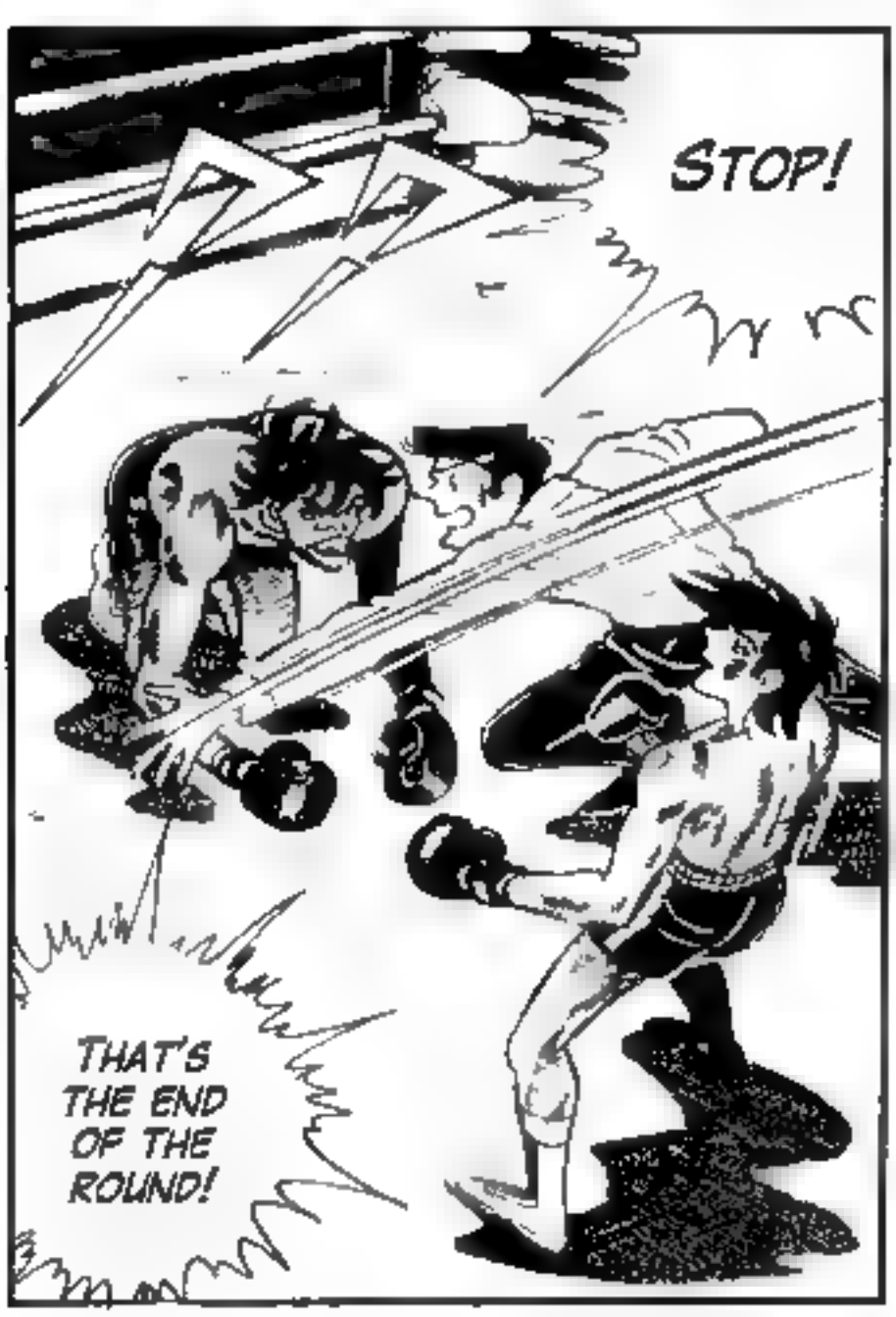
F- FIGHT!

KIKIKI!

KI!

GRR...

JOE'S BACK ON THE ATTACK!


STOP!
THAT'S THE END OF THE ROUND!

A- AGAIN...?

AGHH!

ズサッ

J-
JOE...!

GRRAWRRR!

HANG IN THERE, JOE!

GET SOME LEMON SLICES OUT!

N-NO, WITH THAT POINT DEDUCTION EARLIER, IT'S ACTUALLY A 5-2.

YABUKI DID MANAGE TO LAND A FEW PUNCHES TOWARDS THE END OF THAT ROUND, BUT THE SCORE WAS CLEARLY 5-3 IN FAVOUR OF HARIMAU!

W-WHAT A DREADFUL FIGHT THIS IS TURNING OUT TO BE...

JOE, ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?

JOE!

HIS INJURIES SEEM QUITE SEVERE... DO YOU THINK HE CAN STILL FIGHT?

THIS IS THE SCENE IN WHICH HARIMAU IS ABOUT TO DO A FLIP RIGHT IN FRONT OF YABUKI.

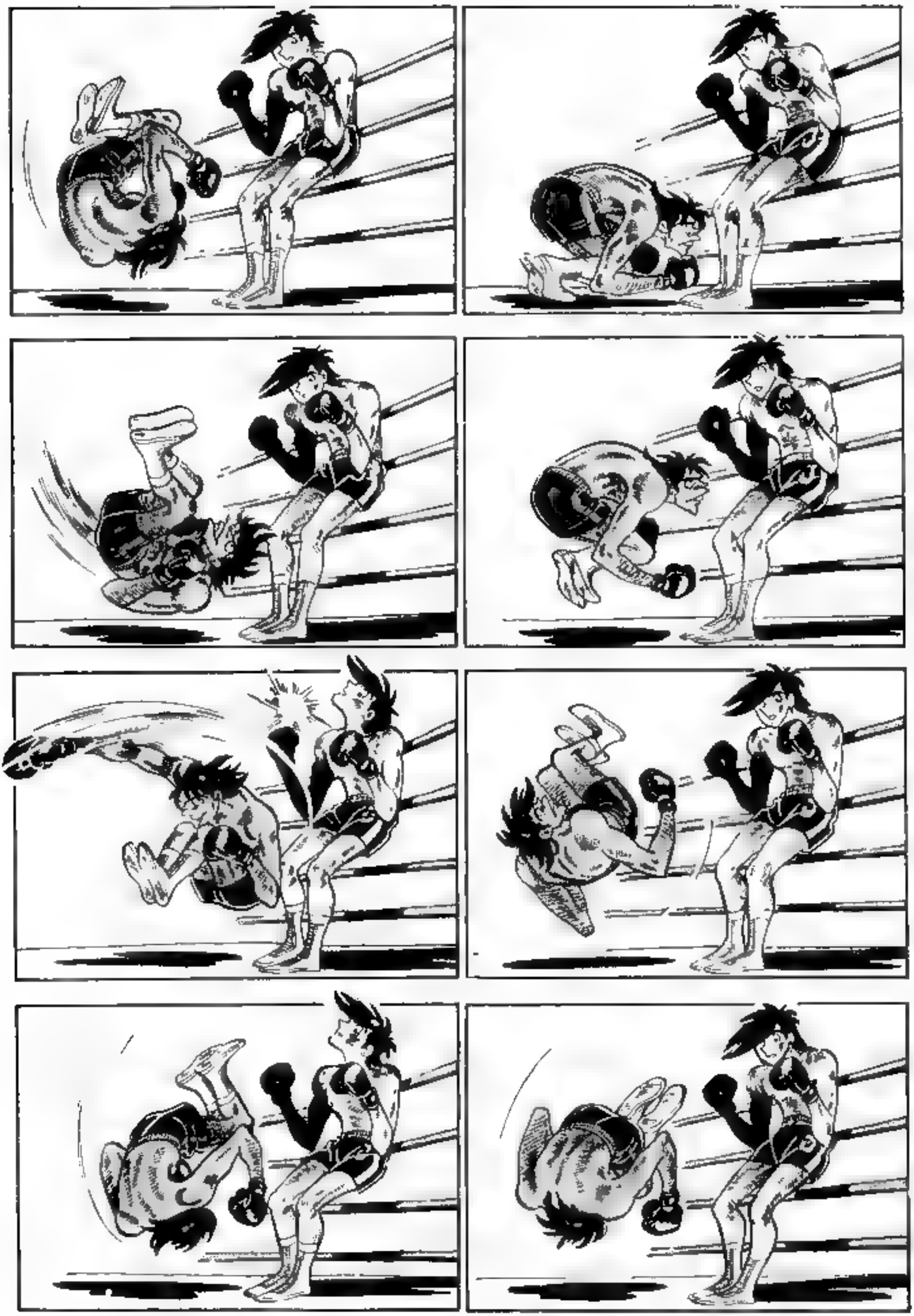
YES, THIS IS IT.

IN ANY CASE, LET US REPLAY YABUKI'S DOWN EARLIER IN SLOW-MOTION SO WE CAN UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY BEHIND IT.

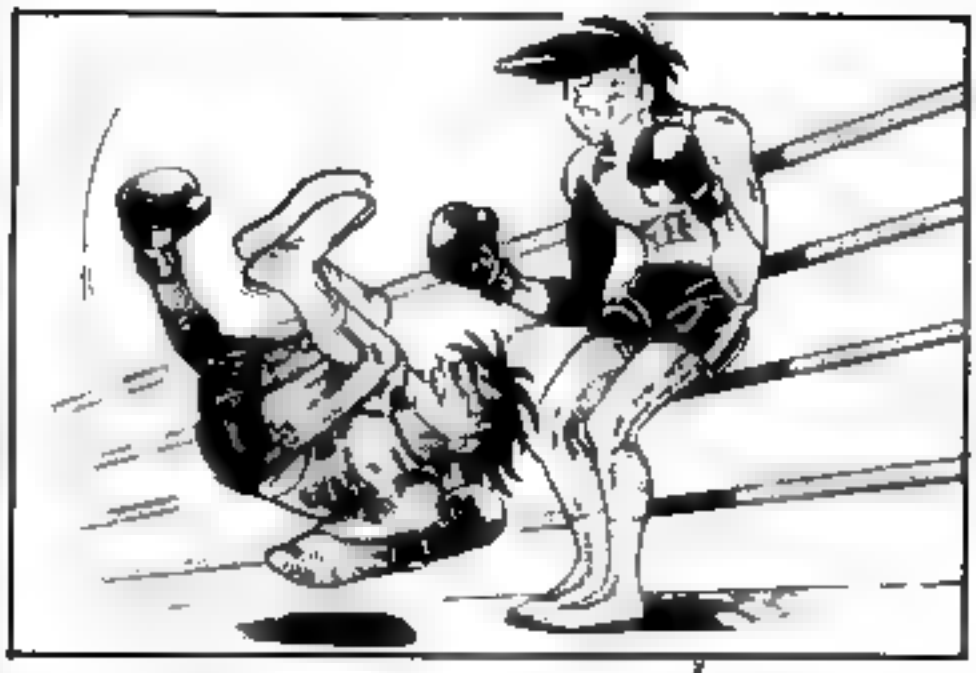
IS THE VIDEO READY?

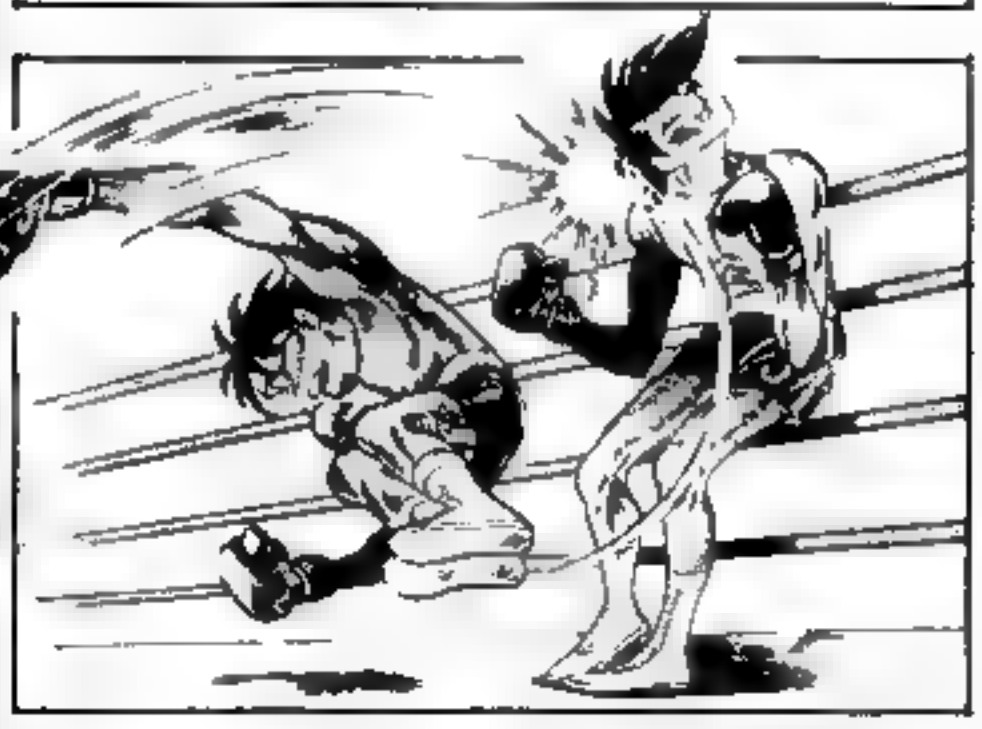
WHAT IN THE...!?

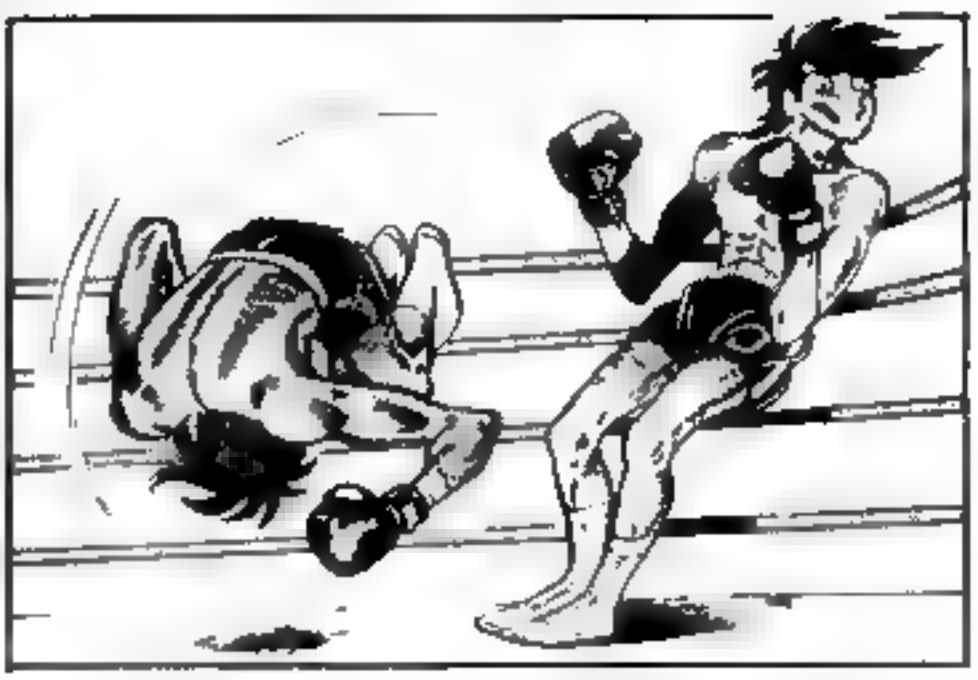
AGHHH!

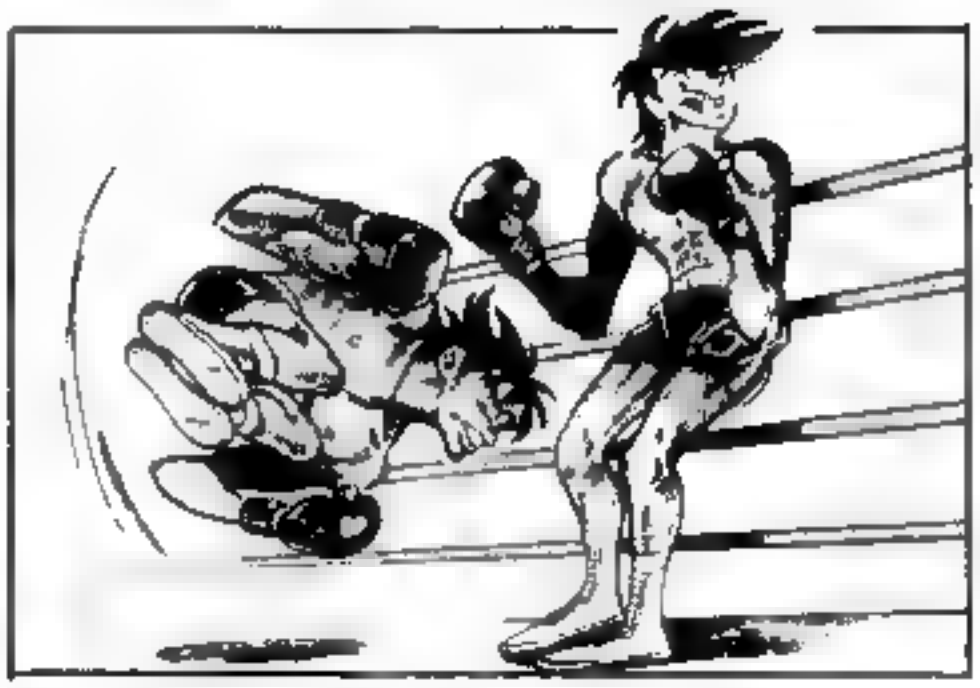


AHHHH!









TO THINK A CORKSCREW BACKFLIP SUITED MORE FOR GYMNASTICS WOULD BE USED IN A BOXING MATCH!

THIS IS QUITE A SURPRISE.

J... JUST WHAT ON EARTH...

IS THIS ATTACK...?

D-DID YOU SEE THAT?

HOLY MOLY...

P-PLEASE PLAY THE CLIP FOR US ONE MORE TIME!

FIRST, HE DRIVES YABUKI BACK ALL THE WAY TO THE ROPES...

THIS IS IT.

JUMPS,

AND BEGINS SPINNING BACKWARDS IN THE AIR.

AND RIGHT BEFORE HIM,

HE CROUCHES DOWN EXTREMELY LOW...

SO THAT HARIMAU'S NOW FACING JOE UPSIDE-DOWN SQUARELY FROM BELOW.

AND WHILE IN THE AIR, HE ADDS A CORKSCREW,

AN UPPERCUT WITH THE ADDED SPEED AND WEIGHT OF A CORKSCREW JUMP WOULD BE EXTREMELY POWERFUL.

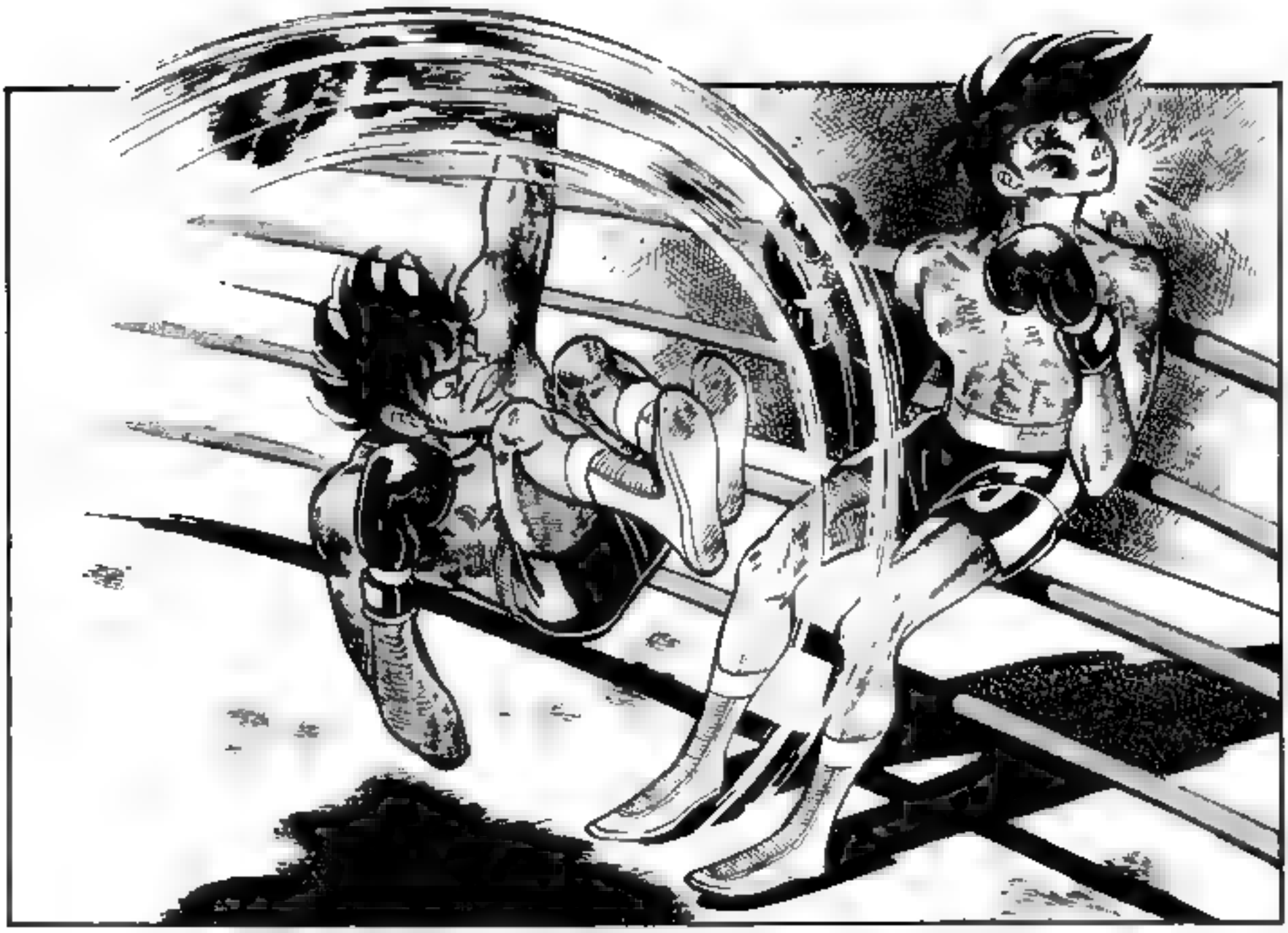
AND HE LANDS THE FIRST HIT WITH HIS RIGHT!

BUT NOT STOPPING THERE,

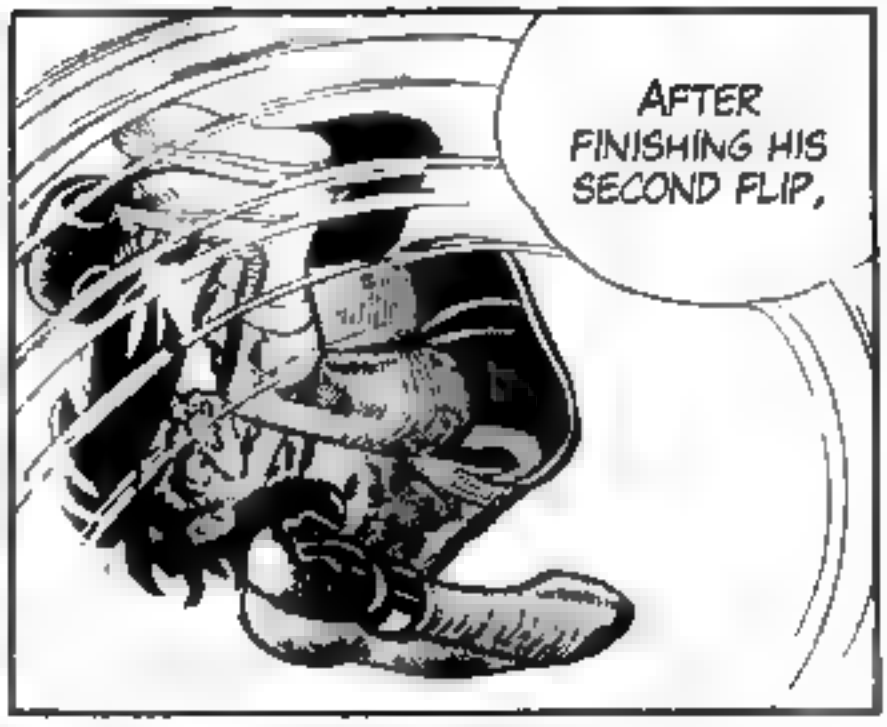
SQUARELY AT YABUKI'S CHIN, WHICH WAS ALREADY REELING BACK FROM THE FIRST HIT!

AFTER FINISHING ONE SPIN,

HE LANDS ANOTHER DEVASTATING HIT,



TO LAND EXACTLY AS HE STARTED.


AFTER FINISHING HIS SECOND FLIP,

HE SPINS TO THE SIDE,

HIS NIMBLENESS, HONED BY LIVING IN THE JUNGLE, AND HIS TWO VERY LONG ARMS AKIN TO A MONKEY ALLOWS HIM TO PULL OFF THIS SPECIAL, UM...

HMM, WHAT SHOULD WE CALL IT? PERHAPS A DOUBLE CORKSCREW BACK-FLIP UPPERCUT?

THIS IS CERTAINLY SOMETHING ONLY A WILD BEAST COULD COME UP WITH.

A... AN UNPRECE-DENTED ATTACK!

YES.

YABUKI IS SLUMPED DOWN ON HIS CHAIR AND IS HARDLY MOVING.

MEANWHILE IN THE OTHER CORNER,

HARIMAU'S SHOUTS SHOW JUST HOW EAGER HE IS FOR ROUND 3 TO START!

T-
THANK
YOU.

HERE'S
HIS MOUTH-
GUARD.

JOE!

JOE!

I THINK LETTING HIM FIGHT
IN THE NEXT ROUND WILL
BE PUSHING IT...

HMM...
THIS LOOKS
QUITE
SEVERE.

JUST
LIKE IN
TRAINING.

I'M TELLIN'
YOU TO PUT
YOUR HAND
OUT LIKE
THIS.

HM?

OLD
MAN...
RAISE
YOUR
HAND.

L-
LIKE
THIS?

HEH HE.
I CAN STILL PACK
A PUNCH, EH?

OWWW!

.....
.....

AND GET READY
FOR THE NEXT
ROUND.
I'M QUIETLY
SITTING DOWN
SO I CAN TAKE
A BREATHER,
SO I'D APPRECIATE
IT IF YOU COULD
STOP BOTHERING
ME DURING MY
BREAK, REF.

I....
I THINK I'LL HAVE HIM FIGHT ANOTHER ROUND.

IT'S HIS SMIRK.

IT'S NOT 'CAUSE OF THAT PUNCH ALONE THAT I GAVE THE OKAY.

I DON'T THINK-

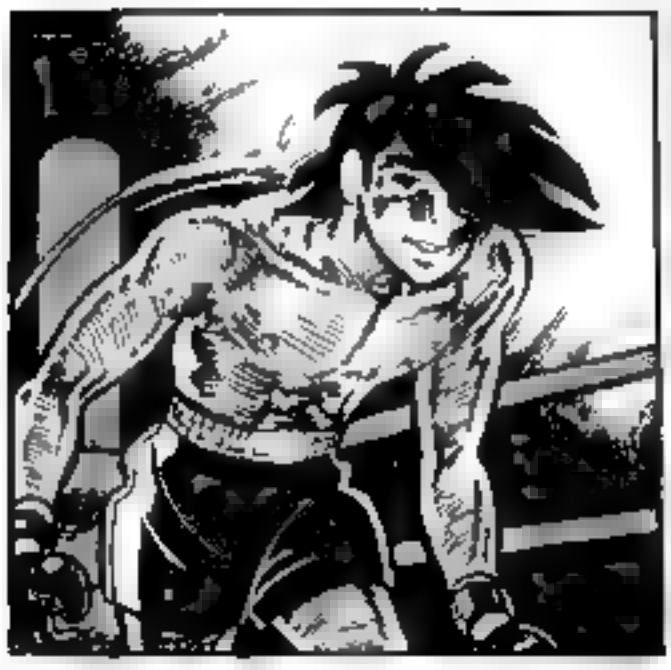
B-BUT COACH! SENPAI'S LEGS ALREADY SEEM DEAD!

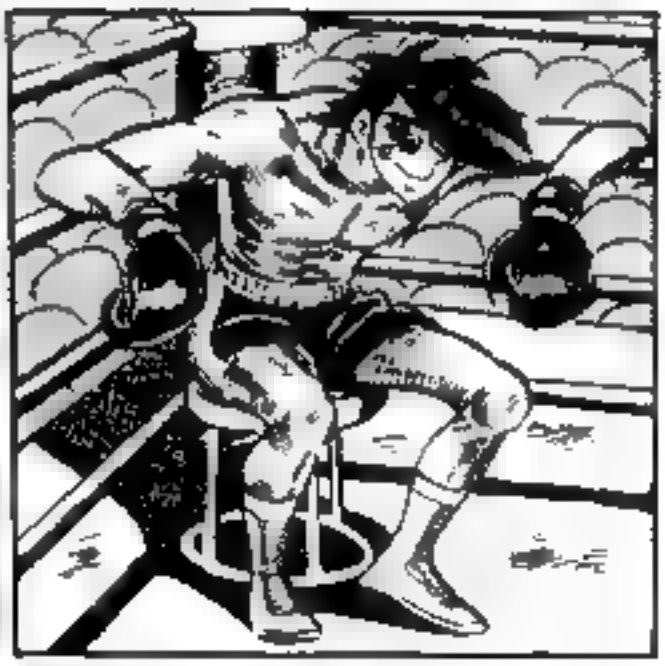
I HAVE TO BET ON HIM!

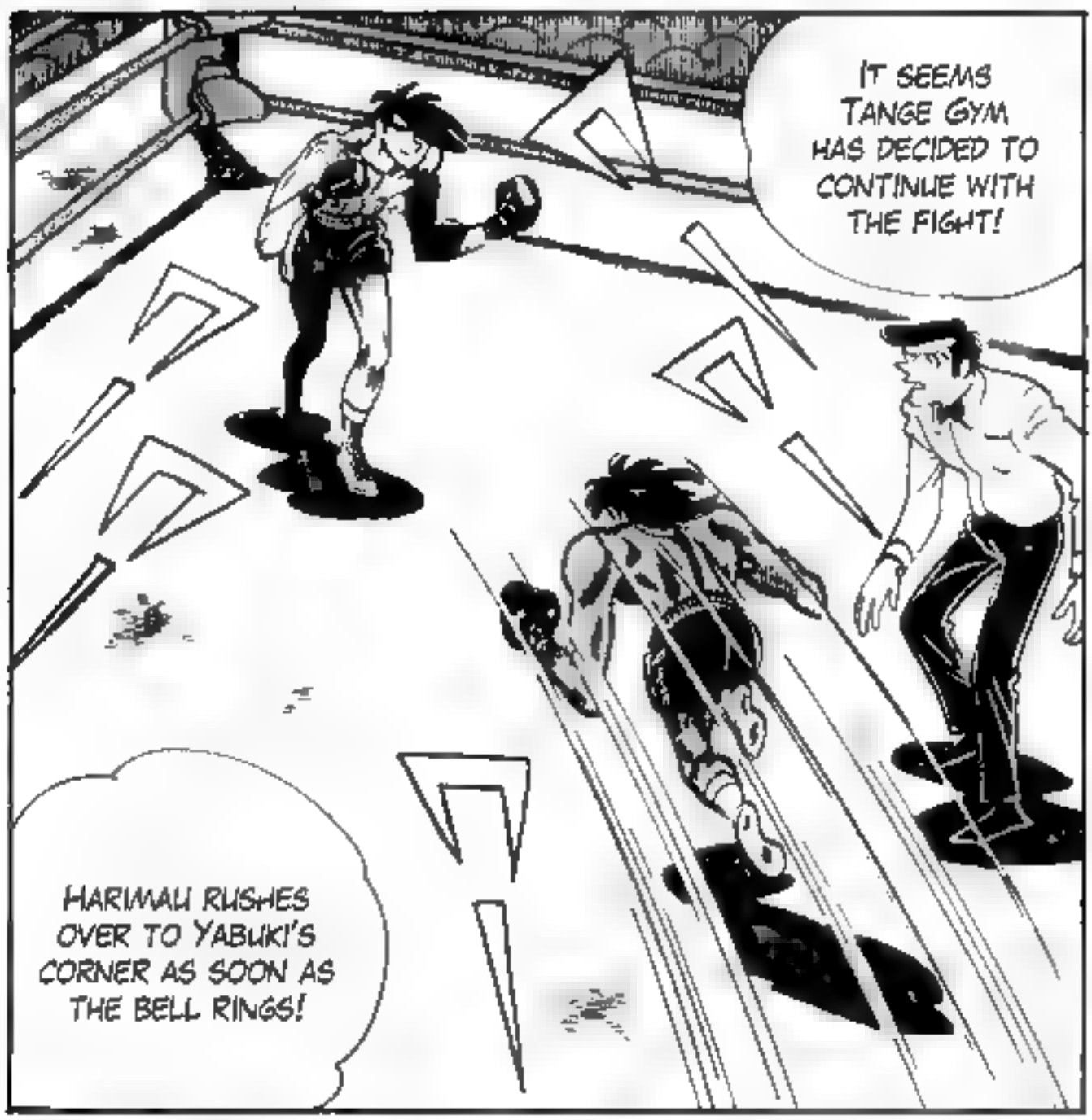
I CAN'T MAKE HIM STOP FIGHTING NOW!

PHYSICALLY, HE MIGHT BE INJURED, BUT MENTALLY, HIS FIGHTING INSTINCTS HAVE FULLY WOKEN UP. HE CAN'T WAIT TO START FIGHTING AGAIN...

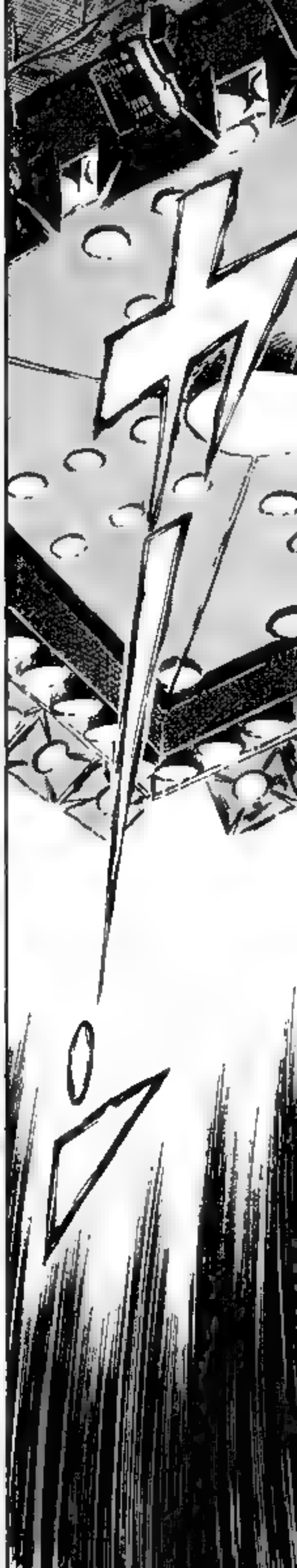
HE'S SMILING LIKE HE'S TRULY HAPPY.

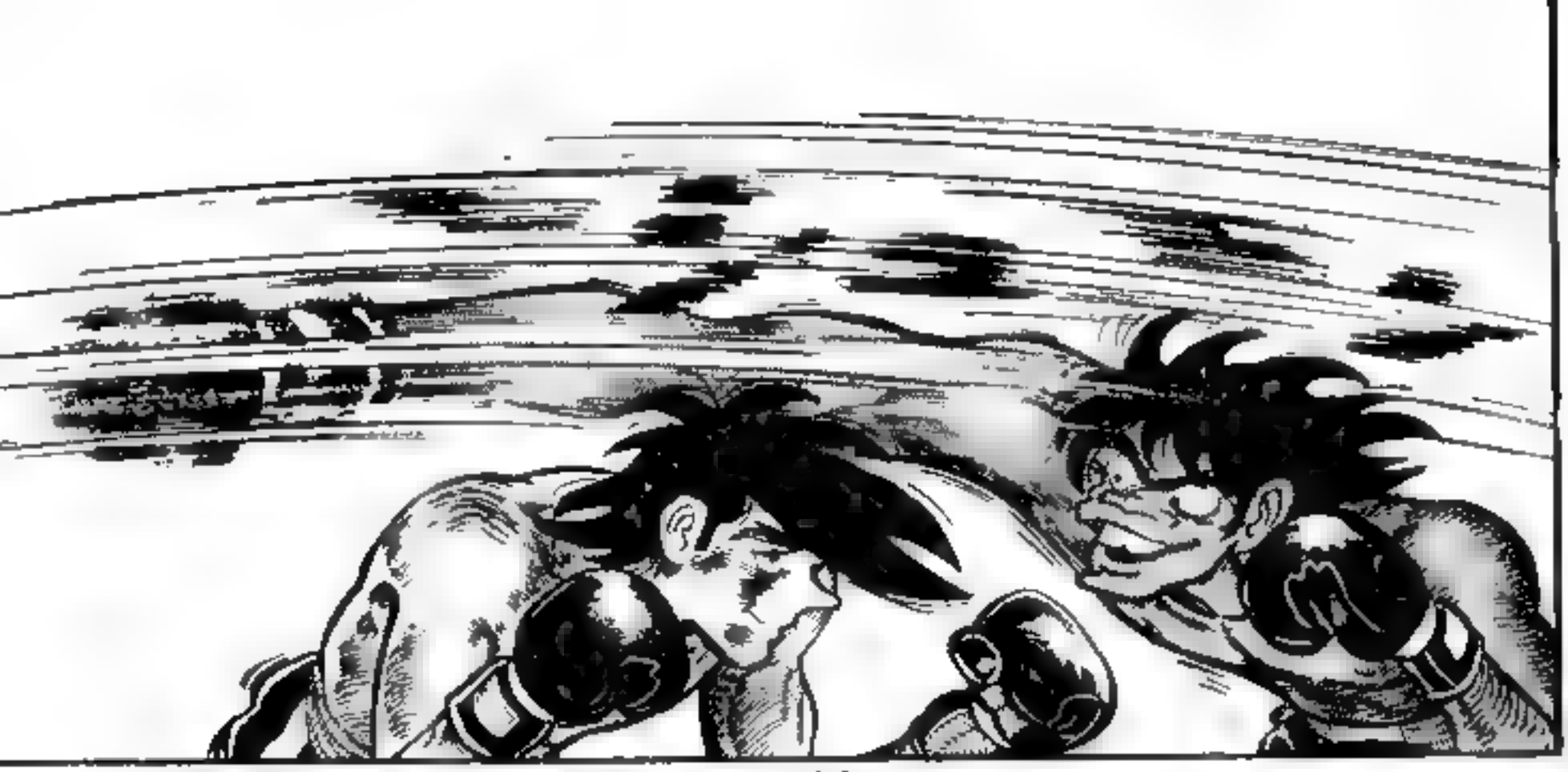





IT SEEMS TANGE GYM HAS DECIDED TO CONTINUE WITH THE FIGHT!
HARIMAU RUSHES OVER TO YABUKI'S CORNER AS SOON AS THE BELL RINGS!

GRAWRRR!





ヒカル
KIKIKI!
KI!
KI!

YABUKI RETURNS A PUNCH, ONLY TO BE DRIVEN BACK AGAINST THE ROPES AGAIN!

AGHH... Y...

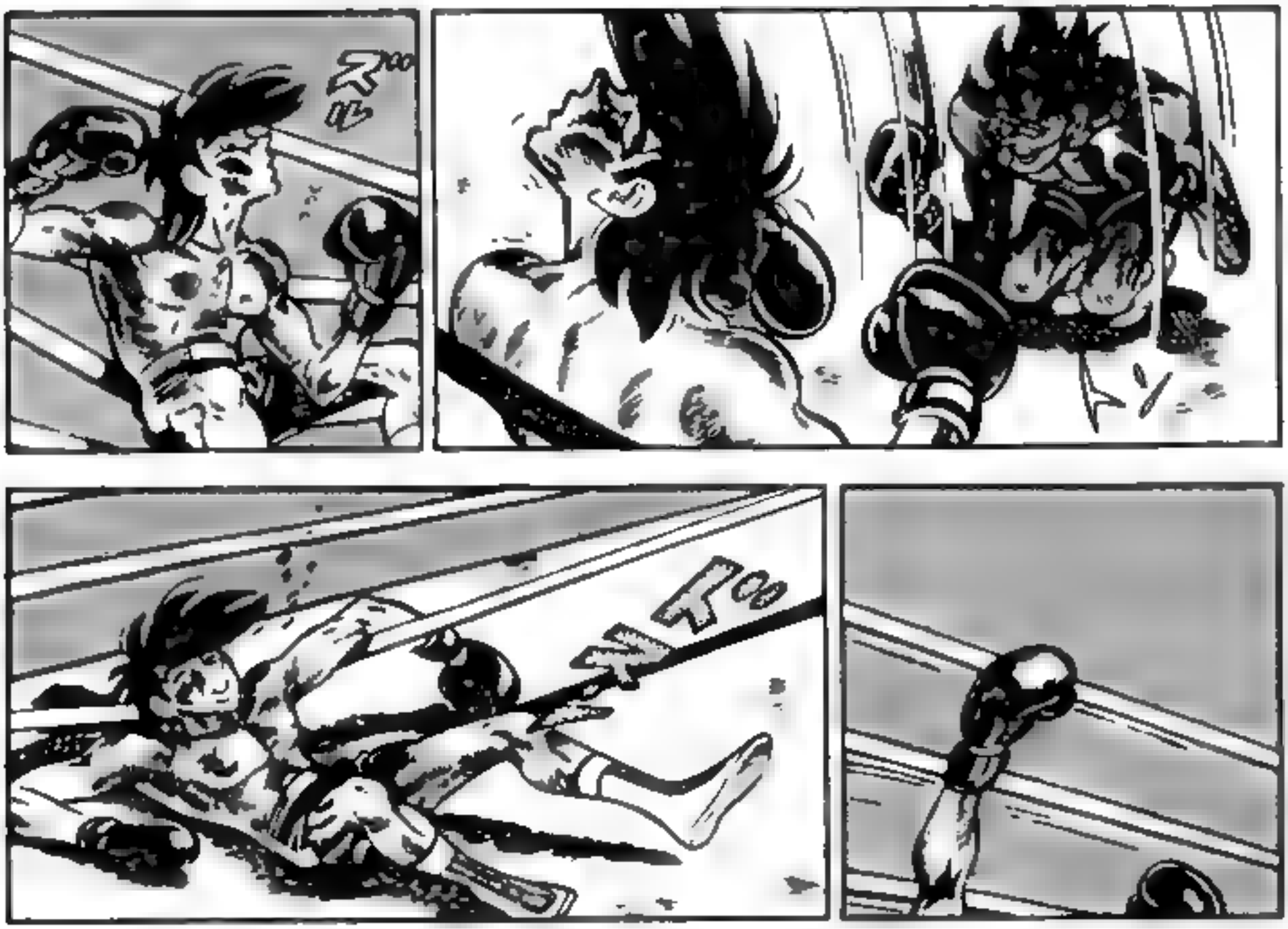
KIKI!

KI!

KIKIKI!

KI!

AGHHH! HE'S DOING IT AGAIN!
THE DOUBLE CORKSCREW BACKFLIP UPPERCUT!



AT THIS RATE, THERE'S A VERY GOOD CHANCE THE PACIFIC TITLE-BELT WILL BE CARRIED OFF TO MALAYSIA.

YABUKI GOES DOWN AGAIN EARLY IN ROUND 3!

H-HE'S DOWN AGAIN!

JOE...

6!

5!

4!

3!

HEH

7...

HE'S LAUGHING AS IF HE'S HAVING A BLAST...

LOOK. HE'S LAUGHING.

WAIT!

AT THIS RATE, YABUKI WILL BE...

Y-YOU'VE GOTTA THROW IN THE TOWEL.

NOT FOR MY OWN SAKE, BUT FOR HIS!

SO I'LL BET ON HIM!

THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN!

AS LONG AS HE HAS THAT SMILE... AS LONG AS HIS FIGHTING INSTINCTS ARE INTACT, HE CAN STILL PULL OFF A MIRACLE.

F-FIGHT!

GRAWRR!

GRR...

HEH HEH

AHH! HERE IT IS AGAIN!

AHHH! YABUKI IS...!?

YABUKI JUMPED EVEN HIGHER!

THAT'S A DOWN!

S- STOP!

GWAAHHHH!

LOOK! HARIMAU'S SPRAWLED ON THE MAT...!

H- HARIMAU IS...

HE'S ALL BLOODIED...

GYAAAA!

GYAAA!

HEH HEH.

BACK TO YOUR CORNER, YABUKI!

GRAWRRR!

DID YOU SEE THAT, BOYS!?

DID YOU SEE?

OHHH...!

A-AHH...

GRR...

3!

4!

THAT'S JOE!

WHAT'D I TELL YA! THAT'S YABUKI JOE, THE GENIUS AT FIGHTING!

HEH HEH.

6!

5!

GRR...

KIK!...

RRAW...

YOU LOOK GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT

WHAT'S WRONG?

KIHEE!

U... UGAHH...

LET ME WIPE YOUR GLOVES.

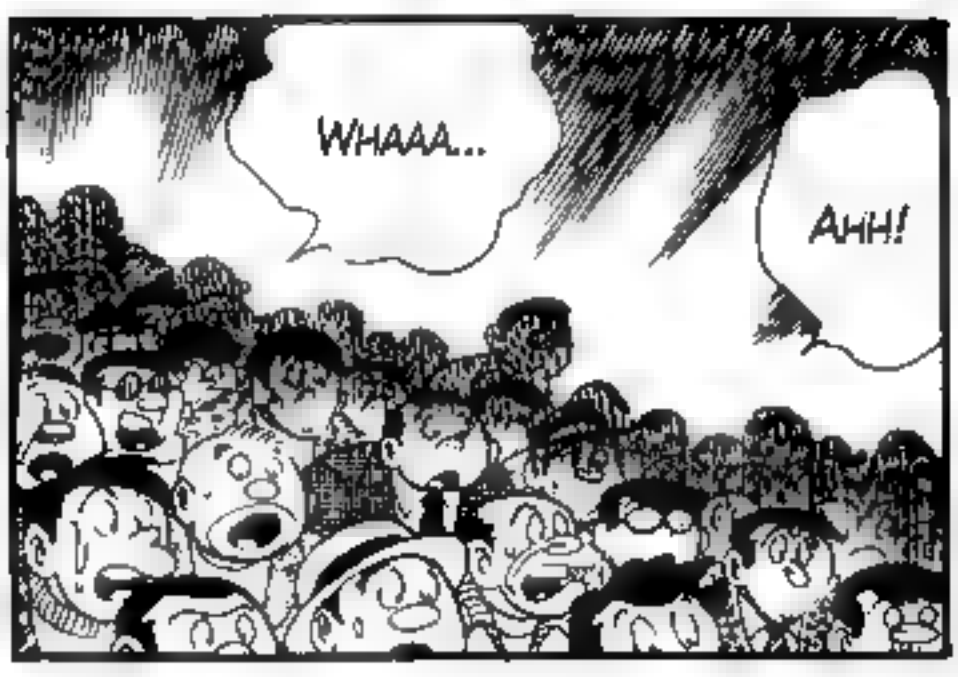
FIGHT!

KEE!
GRR...

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE FOR A COMEBACK!
ALRIGHT!
CHARGE!

H-HEY!
KEE! KEE!
KEE!

YOU HAVE TO FIGHT!
HARIMAU!


WHAAA...
AHH!

NO USE TRYING TO RUN AWAY NOW!

KEEE!

I SAID FIGHT!

HEH.

ドン

KEEEE!

NO... HE'S RUNNING AWAY PRECISELY BECAUSE HE'S A WILD ANIMAL.

WHAT A SHAMEFUL SIGHT THIS IS!

USUALLY, A BOXER WOULD NEVER TRY TO RUN AWAY FROM HIS OPPONENT EVEN IF HE KNOWS HE'S ON THE VERGE OF BEING KO'D.

HARIMAU TRIES TO RUN AWAY WITH NO REGARD FOR WHAT THE CROWD MIGHT THINK!

OH MY!

TO ATTACK FIERCELY WHEN SENSING THE UPPER HAND GOES HAND IN HAND WITH TURNING TAIL WHEN DISADVANTAGED IN THE RULES OF NATURE.

AH, OF COURSE! A WILD BEAST WOULD NATURALLY BE INDIFFERENT TOWARDS HUMAN CONCEPTS LIKE FACE, HONOUR, OR SHAME.

KEE!

YOU...

A FOE WILDER THAN EVEN HIMSELF HERE IN CIVILIZATION!

HE MUST BE IN QUITE A SHOCK AFTER YABUKI SHOWED JUST HOW FUTILE HIS TRUMP CARD WAS, THE DOUBLE CORKSCREW BACKFLIP UPPERCUT! THE WILD BEAST HAS MET HIS MATCH IN THE UNLIKELIEST PLACE!

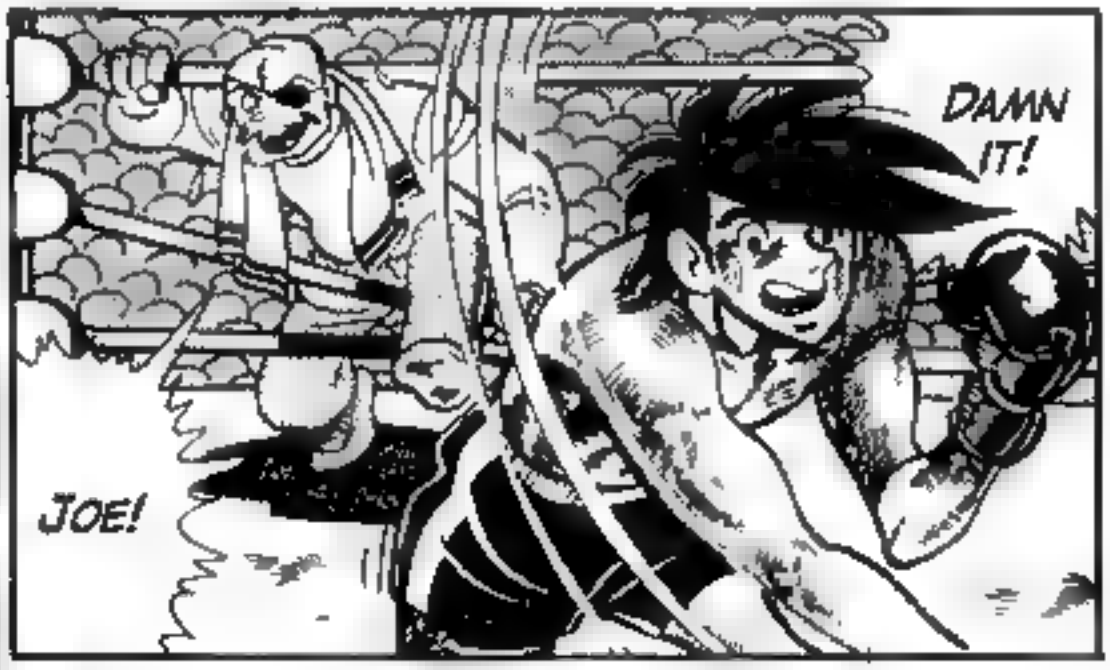
KEEHEE!

UGAHHH!

THE TERROR AT MEETING SUCH AN OPPONENT IS CAUSING HARIMAU TO RUN AROUND IN CIRCLES!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 3!
STOP!

WITH BOTH FIGHTERS SUFFERING A DOWN EACH IN THIS ROUND, IT'S AN EVEN 5-5.
NOW LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE SLOW-MOTION REPLAY OF YABUKI'S COUNTER EARLIER THIS ROUND


DAMN IT!
JOE!

COME!
T-THIS WAY, HARIMAU!

AS HARIMAU JUMPS AND BEGINS TWISTING,

YABUKI ALSO CROUCHES DOWN LOW,

HARIMAU CONFIDENTLY CLOSES IN ON YABUKI TO BEGIN HIS CORKSCREW BACKFLIP AGAIN. .

AFTER KNOCKING HIM DOWN ONCE IN THIS ROUND,

YES, THIS IS THE VERY SCENE!

SINCE YABUKI IS NOW UP HIGH IN THE AIR,

AND JUMPS...

AND HITS HARIMAU IN THE FACE, WHO'S COMING BACK UP!

YABUKI DESCENDS WITH HIS ENTIRE BODY WEIGHT,

AND JUST AS HE'S ONCE AGAIN COMPLETELY UPSIDE-DOWN,

HARIMAU'S FIRST UPPERCUT ONLY HITS THE AIR.

HARIMAU THEN SPEEDS UP FOR HIS SECOND TRY,

OHHH!

THIS IS A CLEAR COUNTER!

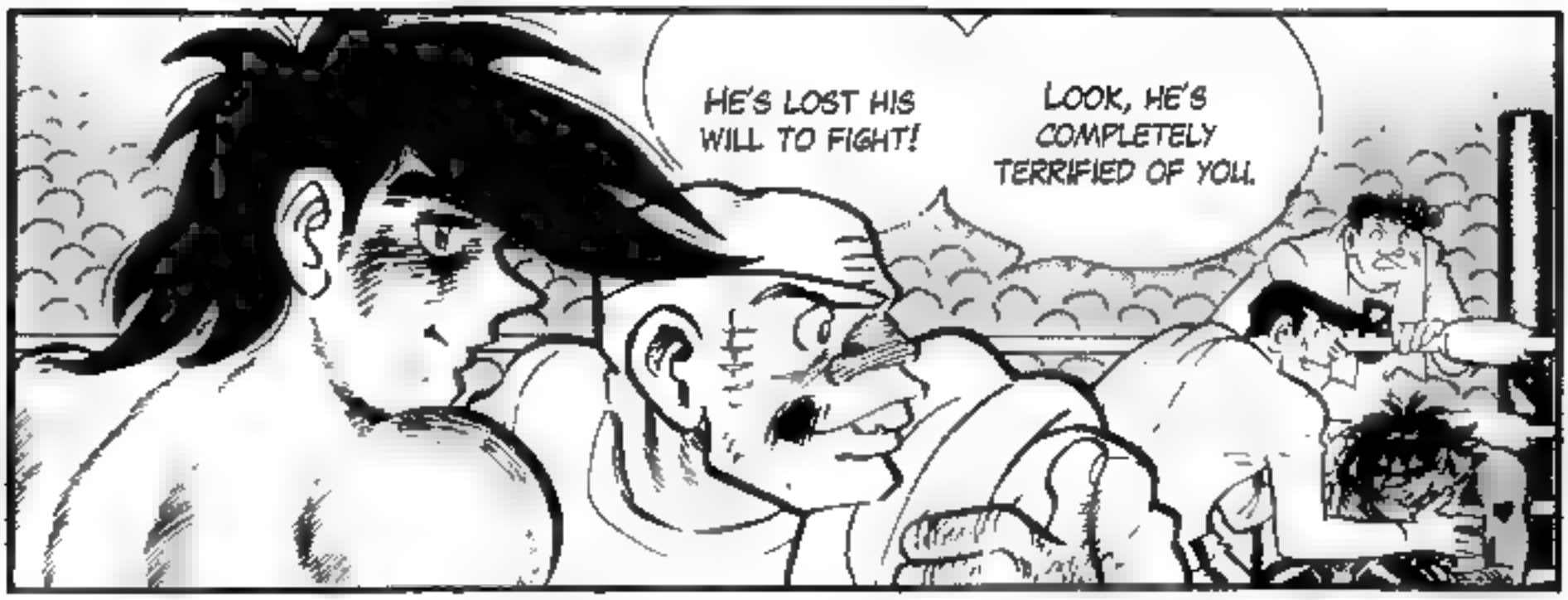
W-WHAT A HIT!

NO WONDER HARIMAU WAS SCARED OUT OF HIS WITS.

HM? HOW'D YOU DO? YOU WERE AMAZING OUT THERE!

HAHA!

Y-YOU DID IT, JOE!


HE'S LOST HIS WILL TO FIGHT!
LOOK, HE'S COMPLETELY TERRIFIED OF YOU.

MAKE SURE TO TAKE PLENTY OF CAUTION.
YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF IN TROUBLE IF YOU DON'T CAREFULLY SEE HOW HE COMES OUT FIRST IN THE NEXT ROUND.

NEXT ROUND HAS TO BE THE LAST. MAKE SURE TO FINISH HIM OFF!
NEXT ROUND...

I'D ADVISE AGAINST THAT...

WHAT GONDOU SAYS IS RIGHT.
HAHA..

G-GONDOU...
.....

HE'LL DO ANYTHING TO SURVIVE...

AN ANIMAL MIGHT RUN WHEN IT'S SCARED, BUT WHEN IT'S PRESSED AS FAR BACK AS IT CAN GO, YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT IT MIGHT DO.

YOU'D BE RIGHT IF I WERE UP AGAINST A NORMAL HUMAN.

BUT I'M FIGHTING AN ANIMAL THIS TIME.

Y-YOU MEAN LIKE THE OLD PROVERB, EVEN A CORNERED RAT BITES BACK AT A CAT?

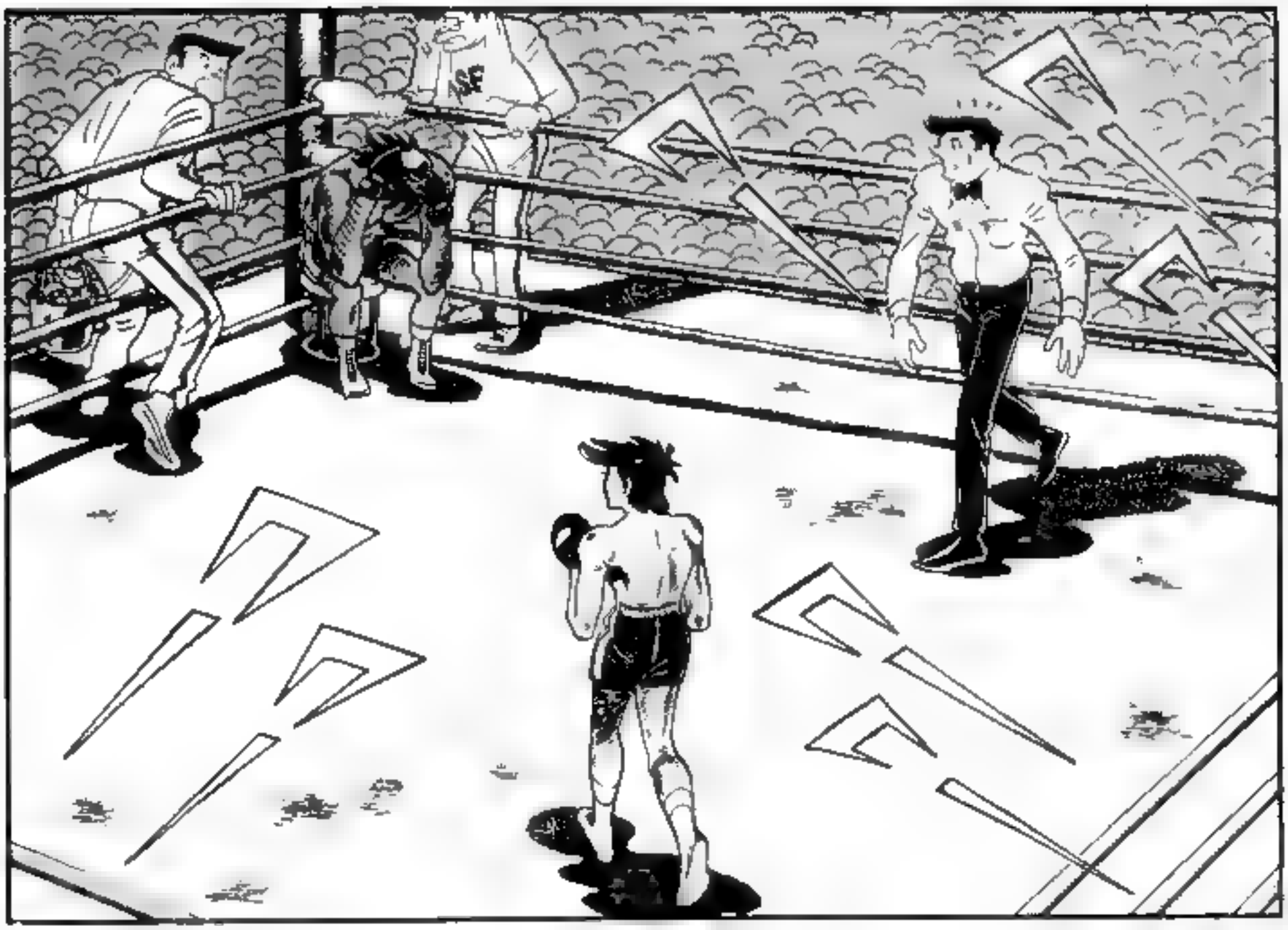
THE NEXT ROUND'LL BE THE ONE WHERE HE'LL STOOP TO ANYTHING FOR HIS SURVIVAL.

I WENT THROUGH THE SAME THING SO I KNOW IT ONLY TOO WELL.

AT THE SAME TIME, IT'LL ALSO BE THE ROUND MOST WORTH FIGHTING TO ME.

HEH HEH.

FFF



GET OUT THERE AND FIGHT!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN JUST FORFEIT HERE!
STOP BEING SCARED! YOU'RE STILL IN THE LEAD FOR POINTS!
KEE... KEE KEE KEE!

THE BELL'S ALREADY RUNG! HURRY UP AND GET OUT THERE!
H-HEY...
KEE KEE...

AH, JEEZ...

2!

1!

3!

I'M STARTING THE COUNT-DOWN IF HE'S NOT COMING FORWARD!

WHAT'S WRONG?

AHHHH! SINCE HARIMAU IS REFUSING TO LEAVE HIS CORNER EVEN AFTER THE BELL RANG, THE REF HAS JUDGED IT AS A DOWN AND IS NOW COUNTING DOWN!

FIRST, YABUKI TRIES TO RUN AWAY IN ROUND 2, AND NOW HARIMAU'S RUNNING AWAY!?

TAKE AWAY THEIR FIGHT MONEY!

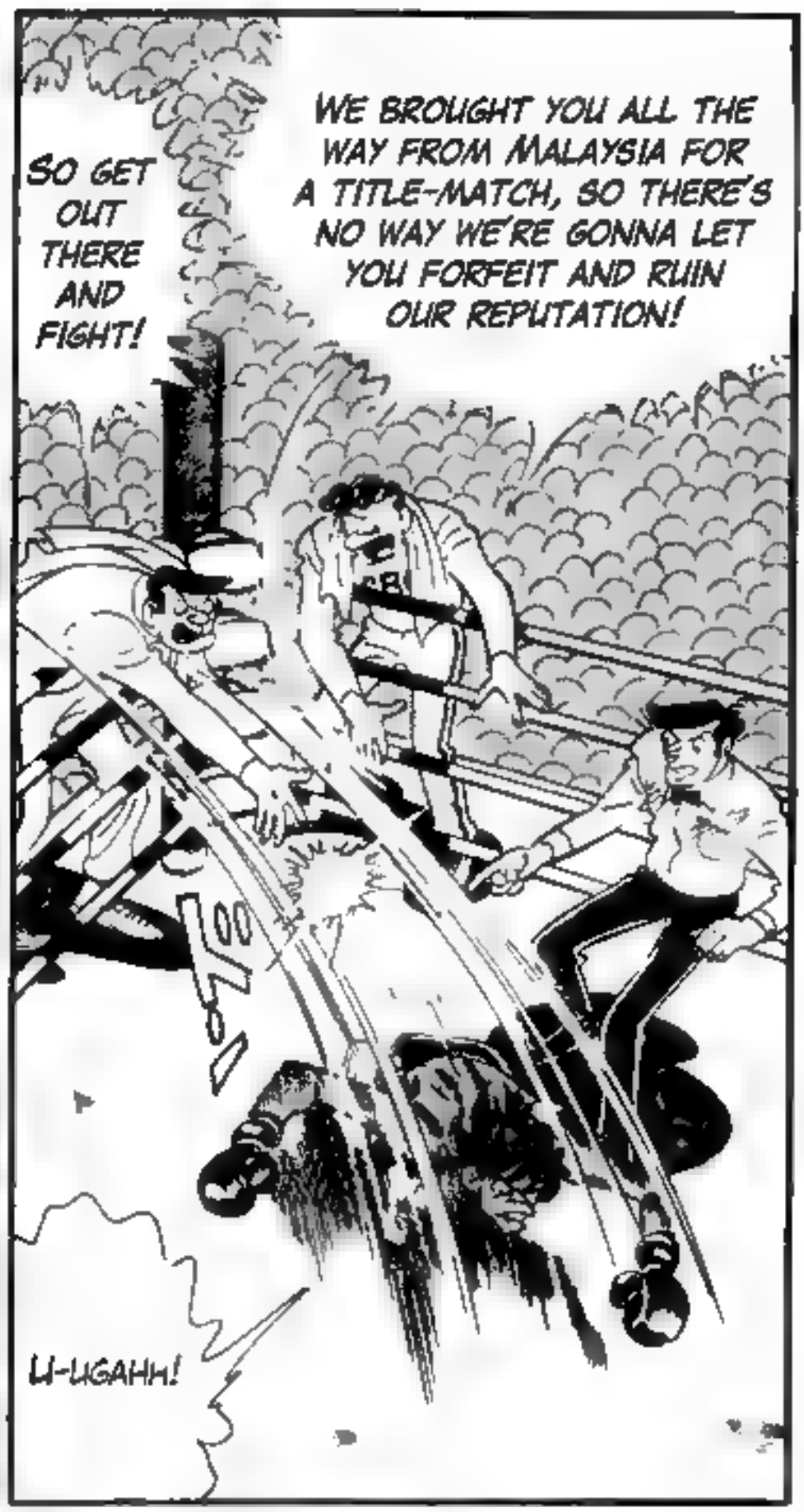
GIVE US OUR MONEY BACK!

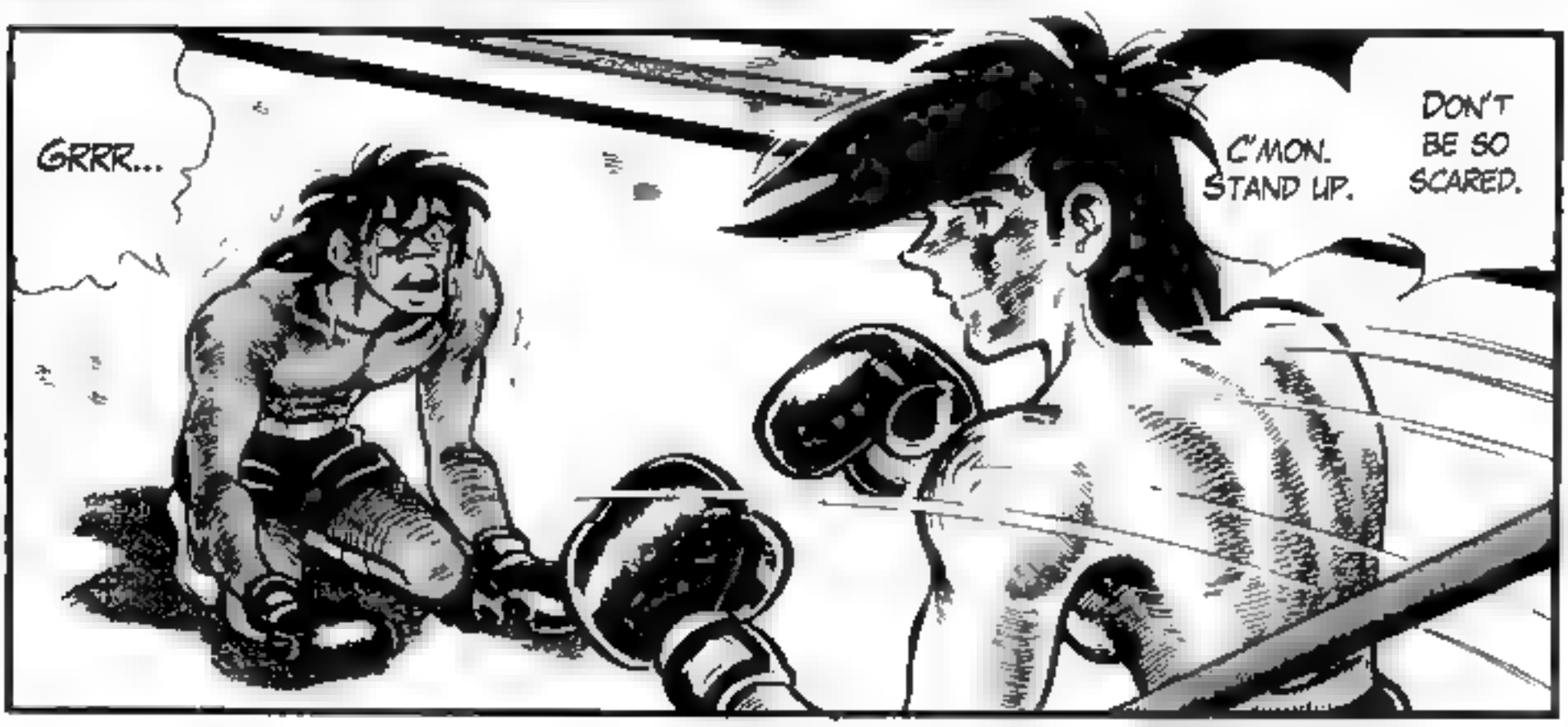
WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THAT ENERGY!? YOU'RE AN EMBARRASSMENT!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, HARIMAU!?

GET OUT THERE AND FIGHT!

KEEE...!
HEH HEH.


WE BROUGHT YOU ALL THE WAY FROM MALAYSIA FOR A TITLE-MATCH, SO THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE GONNA LET YOU FORFEIT AND RUIN OUR REPUTATION!
SO GET OUT THERE AND FIGHT!
U-UGAHH!


GRRR...
C'MON. STAND UP.
DON'T BE SO SCARED.

KEEHEE!

NOT SO FAST.

LET'S DUKE IT OUT!

KEE KEE KEEEEE!

HEH

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM ME IN THIS SMALL RING!

NOPE.

KEEEEE!

GRAWRRRR!

GRRR...

KIIIIII!

HOW THE CORNERED BEAST WILL RESPOND.

GOOD... IT'S TIME TO SEE,

NICE TRY...

HEH HEH.

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!

WAITING FOR YOU TO STRIKE OUT AT ME FIRST!

GOOD ONE!

H-HE DID IT!

DID YOU SEE HIM WALLOP HARIMAU JUST NOW!?

THAT'S MY BOY!

S-STOP!

3!

2!

1!

GRR...

6!

5!

4!

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GONNA START RUNNING AWAY NOW...

HEH HEH.

UGAHHH!

GRAWRRR...

7!

8!

YOU'RE WILLING TO COME AT ME?

OH?

MUCH APPRE-CIATED.

AHH! NO, WAIT!

I HAVE TO WIPE YOUR GLOVES!

GIIII!

IT'LL SAVE ME THE TIME AND EFFORT TRYING TO CHASE YOU.

A BUNCH!

THANKS...

GRAWRR...

G...

GIIIIIII!

A HEAD-BUTT!

AHH!

AGHH-

KEE!

KEEHEE HEE!

LIGHH!

THAT'S A PENALTY! STOP!

S-STOP!

GUHAH!

RAWRRR!

YOU ROTTEN BASTARD!

AGHHH!

Y- YOU...

THE HELL ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE, REF!?

HE'S CLEARLY AND WILLINGLY DISREGARDING ALL THE RULES OF INTERNATIONAL BOXING!

T-THE CORNERED HARIMAU SEEMS TO HAVE SNAPPED AS HE UNLEASHES A FLURRY OF ILLEGAL BLOWS!

IF I HAVE TO PENALIZE YOU ONE MORE TIME, IT'LL ALSO MEAN AN AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION AND LOSS FOR YOU!

THAT'S A 3 POINT DEDUCTION, FOR A HEAD-BUTT, AN ELBOW, AND A KICK!

HARIMAU!

I AIN'T GONNA ACCEPT A TECHNICAL LOSS BY DISQUALIFICATION.

NO NEED FOR YOU TO INTERFERE WITH THIS MATCH THAT MUCH, REF.

GRR..

A KO'S THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE CONCLUSION.

U-UGAH-HHH!

IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE...

HEH HEH...

JUST WHEN MY SPECIAL TRAINING WITH GONDOU AND HIS GANG IS ABOUT TO BECOME USEFUL !

I CAN'T ALLOW THIS MATCH TO END BECAUSE HE VIOLATED A FEW PRISSY RULES,

K-KEEE!

HAH!

OOF!

ANOTHER JUMP-ATTACK!?

AH-

GYAHHHH!

AGHHHHH!

GRAWRRR!

GRR...

GRAWRRR!

GRR...

I'M THROWING YOU OUT!

THAT'S A FOUL!

THIS FIGHT IS A MESS...

T...

AHH! HARIMAU KNEES YABUKI IN THE FACE AND IS NOW GNAWING AT HIS SHOULDER!

SON OF A!

YABUKI! YOU DON'T NEED TO HOLD ANYTHING BACK! GET BACK AT THAT MONKEY WITH AN ILLEGAL BLOW OR TWO OF YOUR OWN!

THAT GODDAMNED MALAYSIAN MONKEY!

KILL THAT GODDAMNED FREAK!

IT'S JUST A LAST BIT OF FUTILE RESISTANCE.

I SAID IT'S FINE.

LET HIM FIGHT HOWEVER HE WANTS...

MAKING YABUKI JOE THE WINNER!

H-HARIMAU IS DISQUALIFIED,

GRR...

IT'S TIME TO FINALLY DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW.

HAHA... I'VE HAD ENOUGH WITH THIS FIGHT.

CAN'T LET YOU JUMP AND CAUSE TROUBLE AGAIN NOW.

NOT SO FAST.

STAY ON THE GROUND...

AND BE A GOOD SANDBAG, OKAY!?

HE'S MERELY BEING PUMMELED AT THE CENTER OF THE RING!

HARIMAU OFFERS NO RESISTANCE!

AHH! YABUKI HAS CAUGHT HARIMAU!

AND NOW...

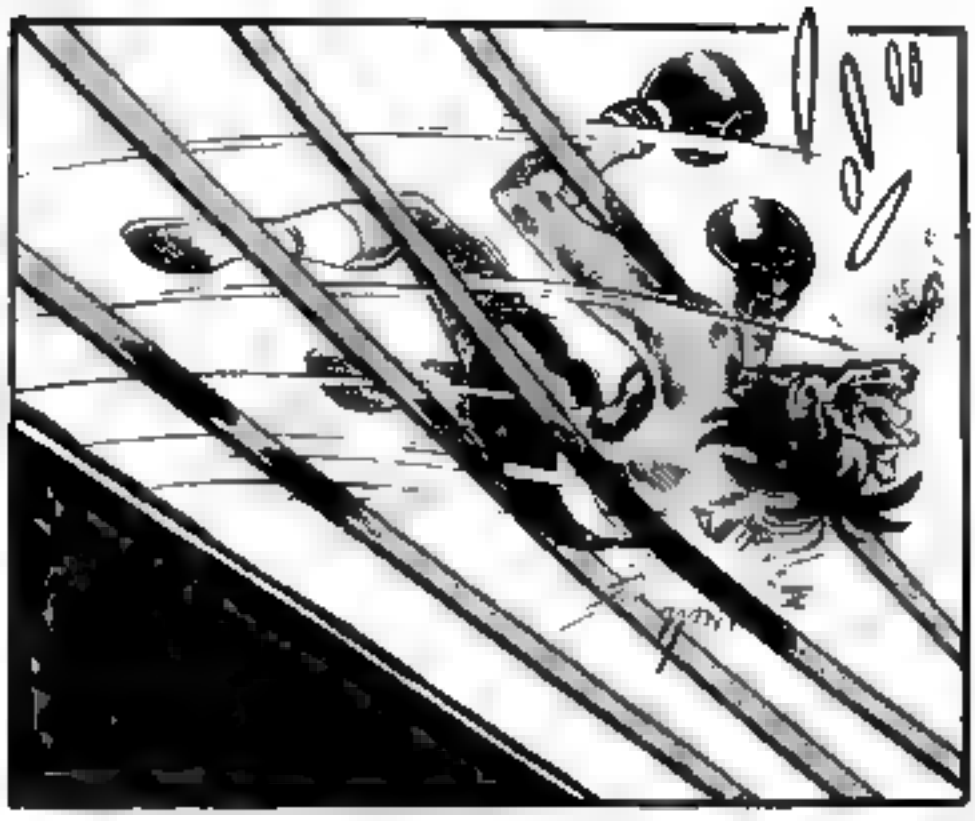
G... GIII...

THE FINISHING BLOW!

AGHHH!

ACK!

KYAAA!



MENDOZA'S UP NEXT!

THAT'S THE YABUKI WE KNOW AND LOVE!

YOU DID IT!

HE RAISES THE BLOODY ARM OF THE CHAMPION!

THE REF DECLARES A KO-WIN FOR YABUKI JOE!

YABUKI SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS HIS PACIFIC BANTAMWEIGHT TITLE-BELT FOR THE SECOND TIME!

THE MATCH ENDS IN A VERY YABUKI-LIKE FASHION!

EVEN THOUGH THE REF ALREADY HAD DECLARED A TECHNICAL LOSS A MOMENT AGO, YABUKI IGNORED THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO DECISIVELY KNOCK HARIMAU OUT OF THE RING, SECURING A 4TH ROUND KO-WIN!

YOU REALLY ARE SOMETHIN'...

J-JOE, YOU SON OF A GUN...!

WHAT A TREMENDOUS PERFORMANCE FROM THE CHAMPION, YABUKI JOE!

THE ECSTATIC CLUB OWNER TANGE DANPEI CANNOT HIDE HIS ELIPHORIA!

THE SUCCESSFUL TITLE-DEFENSE TOOK 2 MINUTES AND 45 SECONDS INTO ROUND 4!

NOW THEN. WITH THIS MATCH WON, THERE'S ONLY THE WORLD CHAMPION JOSÉ MENDOZA LEFT STANDING IN HIS WAY !

THEY'RE NOW SETTING UP FOR THE SHORT COMMENDATION CEREMONY ON THE RING FOR YABUKI JOE.

BRAVO.

HEH.

YOU VERY VERY STRONG BOXER.

COME THEN, JOE!

AH, OF COURSE.

PLEASE COME FORWARD. WE'RE ABOUT TO READ THE CERTIFICATE ACKNOWLEDGING A SUCCESSFUL TITLE-DEFENSE.

C... CARLOS RIVERA...!

HAHA...

HA..

W-WHAT!?

IT'S CARLOS RIVERA!

LOOK!

HE'S GOTTEN UP ON THE RING!

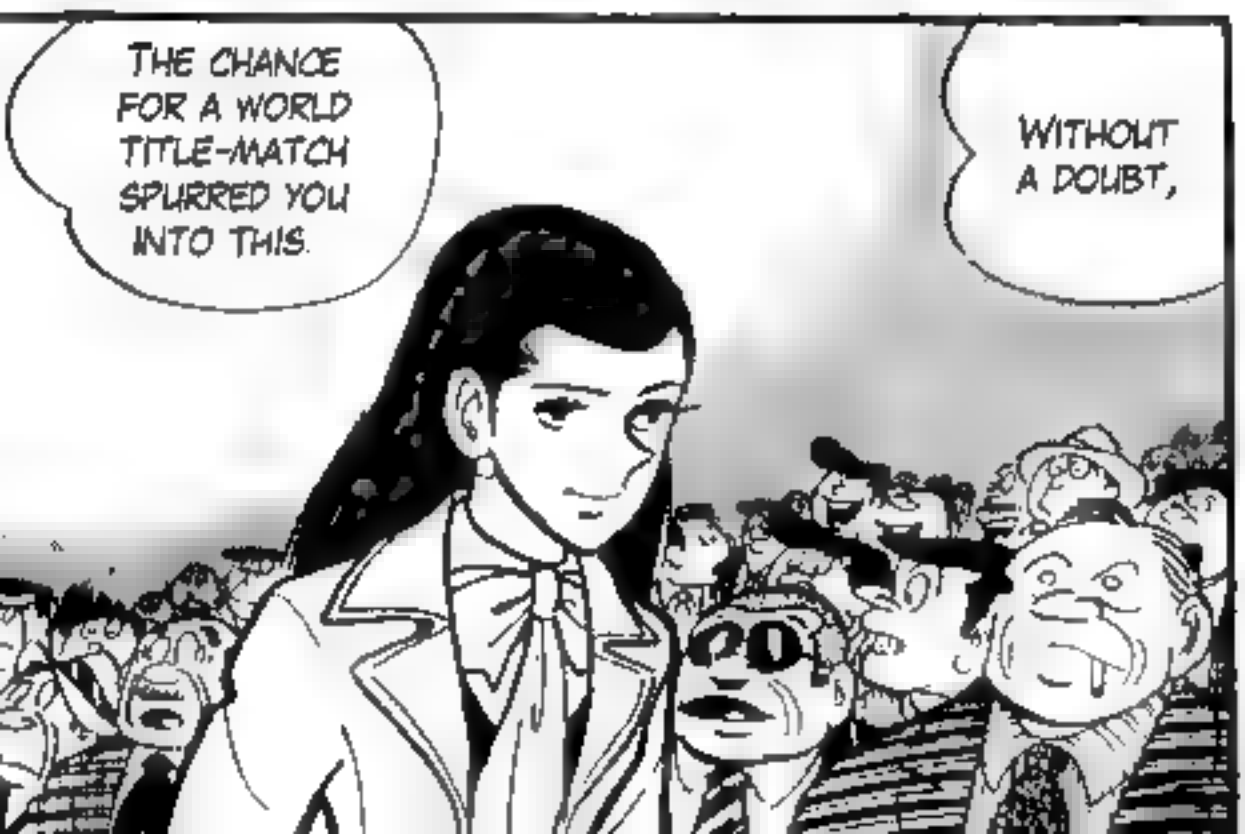
AHH! OVER HERE!

...

DAMMIT! HOW'D THAT HOBO SNEAK HIS WAY ONTO THE RING...!?
EXCUSE US THROUGH!

YOU BEAT HARIMAU DECISIVELY... EVEN HARIMAU'S ILLEGAL NO-RULES FIGHTING STYLE WAS NO PROBLEM FOR YOU...!
NOT ONLY THAT,

YOUR WILDNESS HAS NOW FULLY RETURNED WITH THIS MATCH.
YABUKI...


THE CHANCE FOR A WORLD TITLE-MATCH SPURRED YOU INTO THIS.
WITHOUT A DOUBT,

IT WAS YOUR BURNING DESIRE TO FACE JOSÉ MENDOZA, THE PERFECT CHAMPION WITH THE COMPLETE PACKAGE... YOU PUT HIM IN YOUR SIGHTS ALL THE WHILE FIGHTING HARIMAU.

TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HERE!
HE SEEMS DRUNK...
HUH? WHAT'S WITH THAT DARK-SKINNED HOBO?

A FOREIGNER?
HM? IT SEEMS SOMEONE HAS SNUCK UP ON THE RING AND IS CAUSING A STIR.

IN ANY CASE...
IT SEEMS IT WAS WORTH CALLING HARIMAU ALL THE WAY OVER FROM MALAYSIA..

CARLOS RIVERA! YOU'RE CARLOS, RIGHT!?

YOU FOUGHT WONDERFUL MATCH...

HEH HEH.

D-DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, JOE!

. . . . . !!

HE...

HE CERTAINLY DOES RESEMBLE CARLOS, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THIS SHABBY HOBO COULD BE THAT SAME ENERGETIC AND FLASHY CARLOS...

NO WAIT-

THAT'S ENOUGH!

GET OFF THE RING!

HE'S CLEARLY SOME HIPPY FOREIGNER WANDERING AROUND JAPAN!

I THINK THE FATIGUE'S NOT MAKING YOU THINK STRAIGHT.

WHO THE HELL COULD HE BE IF NOT CARLOS RIVERA!?

HOW CAN YOU NOT TELL IT'S HIM!?

NO, IT'S **YOU** WHO'S NOT THINKING STRAIGHT!

I'M GONNA HEAD ON BACK FIRST WITH CARLOS.

TAKE MY PLACE FOR THE CEREMONY, OLD MAN!

A-ARE YOU OUTTA YOUR MIND!?

IF HE WANTS YABUKI'S AUTOGRAPH, TELL HIM TO COME BACK LATER!

TAKE AWAY THAT DIRTY HOBO OFF THE RING!

HEY! WHAT'S THE LONG HOLD-UP FOR!?

I'LL BE THERE SOON.

HEY, KOUNO. TAKE CARLOS BACK TO DRESSING ROOM.

B-BUT...

OH SHOOT...

I CAN'T LET THE CROWD FIND OUT THAT THIS IS WHAT BECAME OF CARLOS...

NOW!

JUST TAKE HIM BACK!

ISN'T THAT THE SAME NAME AS THAT FLASHY PLAYBOY BOXER WHO FOUGHT YABUKI AT KOURAKUEN BASEBALL STADIUM SOME TIME BACK?

CARLOS RIVERA?

WHO THE HELL IS THIS DUDE...?

N-NAH. IT COULDN'T BE...

YOU'VE STILL GOTTA HEAD OVER TO THE BROADCAST BOOTH AND GIVE AN INTERVIEW!

N-NO WAIT!

LET'S GO BACK, OLD MAN.

ALRIGHT, I'VE GOT MY BELT AND CERTIFICATE.

AH-

J-JOE, WAIT!

ANSWER THEM HOWEVER YOU WANT!

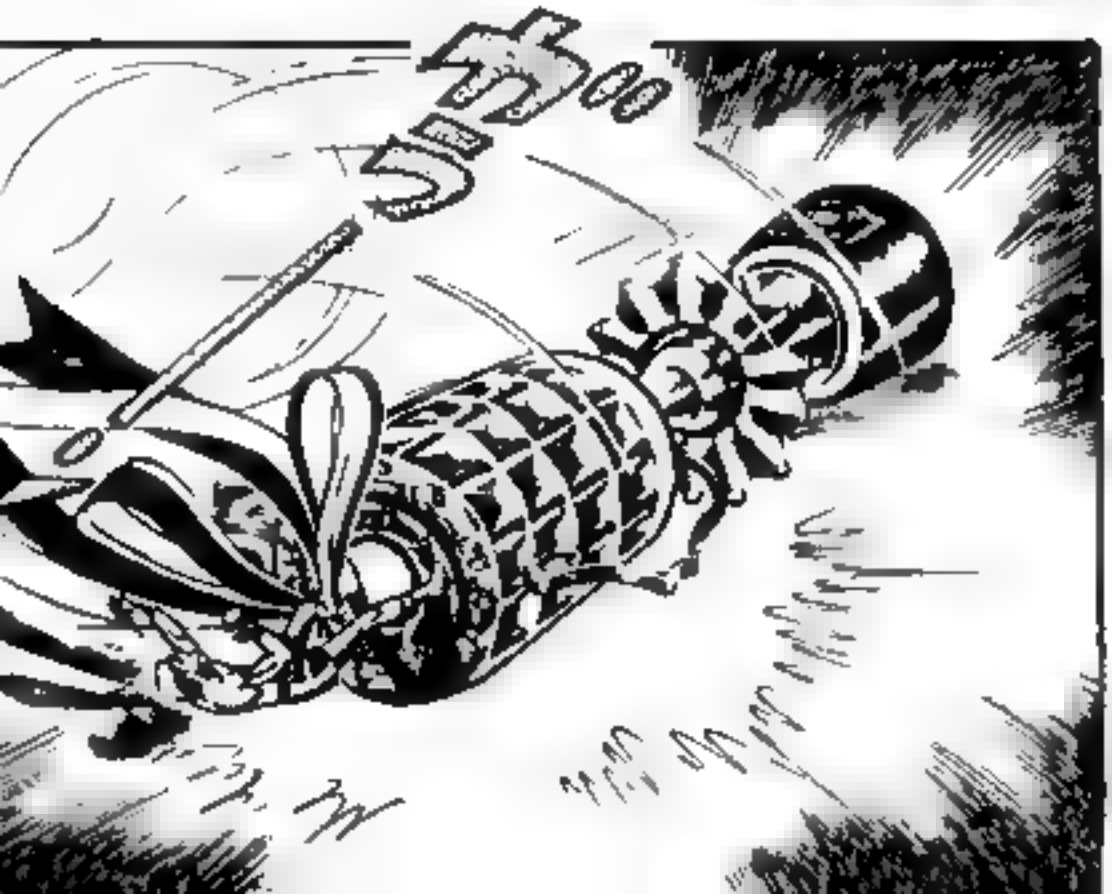
I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.

THANKS!

HA.

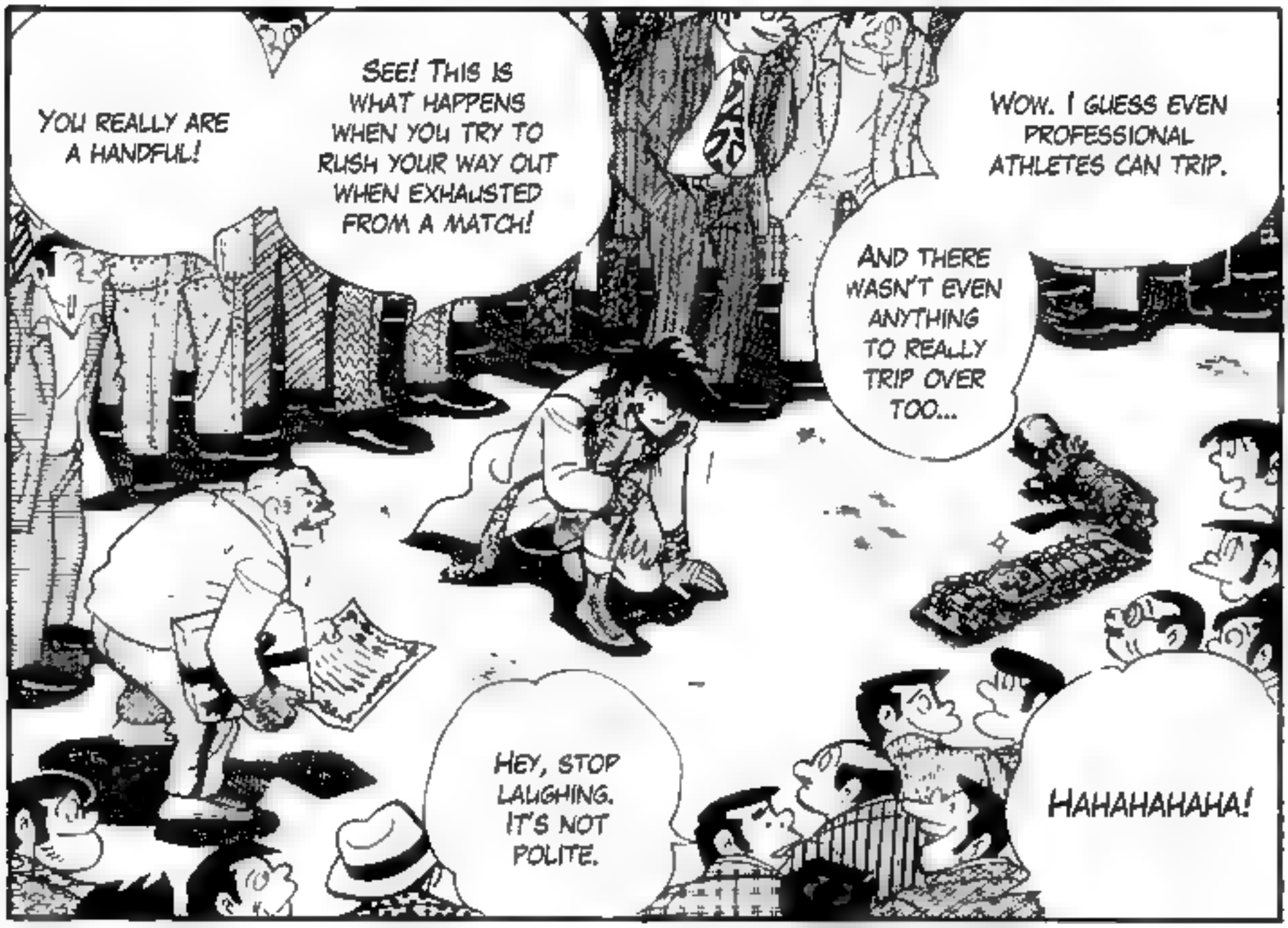
YOU'VE ONLY GOT THE WORLD-TITLE STILL LEFT TO TAKE NOW!

YOU FOUGHT GOOD OUT THERE, YABUKI!



JOEEE!
JOE!

OWW..


YOU REALLY ARE A HANDFUL!
SEE! THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY TO RUSH YOUR WAY OUT WHEN EXHAUSTED FROM A MATCH!
WOW. I GUESS EVEN PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES CAN TRIP.
AND THERE WASN'T EVEN ANYTHING TO REALLY TRIP OVER TOO...
HEY, STOP LAUGHING. IT'S NOT POLITE.
HAHAHAHAHA!

AH, THANK YOU VERY MUCH...

HERE'S YOUR TROPHY, SIR.

OLD MAN...

W. WHERE ARE YOU?

HERE. GRAB ONTO MY SHOULDERS!

DID YOU SKIN YOUR KNEE?

WHAT'S WRONG?

AH-

WHAT'S WRONG!? GET A GRIP!

JOE!

C'MON, LET'S GET BACK TO CARLOS!

IT'S NOTHING.

MY EYES BLACKED OUT FOR A MOMENT FOR SOME REASON..

HA...

HAHAHA...

YOU SEEM PRETTY TIRED! HEY, TANGE! GIVE YOUR BOXER A GOOD DAY'S REST, ALRIGHT!?

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, CHAMP!

T-THANK YOU, EVERYONE...

I'M PRETTY IMPRESSED YABUKI DIDN'T RESORT TO ANY ILLEGAL BLOWS OF HIS OWN EVEN AFTER HARIMAU WENT BERSERK.

NOT SURPRISING THAT YABUKI TRIPPED WHILE WALKING BACK. HE MUST BE PRETTY EXHAUSTED AFTER GETTING KICKED AND BITTEN BY THAT MONKEY.

YEAH, I'VE GOT A WHOLE NEW IMPRESSION OF HIM!

I NEVER IMAGINED A GUY WITH A REPUTATION FOR BEING A WILD BRAWLER COULD JUST LET ALL THOSE PENALTIES SLIDE AND BEAT HIS OPPONENT FAIR AND SQUARE!

CARLOS..

S-SENPAI.

Yabuki

BUT HE STILL MUMBLED ON ABOUT HOW HE'S THE UNCROWNED EMPEROR AND WANTS TO FIGHT JOE YABUKI AT KOURAKUEN ONE MORE TIME...

HE'S TOO FAR GONE TO EVEN REMEMBER HIS OWN NAME,

I THINK THIS GUY REALLY IS CARLOS RIVERA.

COACH,

YOU NICE GUY...

JOE YABUKI...

OHH...

I TOO VERY VERY STRONG BOXER... HAHA...

M-MOVE ASIDE FOR A SEC.

CARLOS..

YOU... YOU VERY VERY STRONG BOXER...

W-WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...?

LET'S FIGHT ONE MORE HERE TO [redacted] WHO STRONGER, NO?

JOE YABUKI...

IT'S CARLOS RIVERA, ALRIGHT!

IT'S...

AHH!

VERY VERY FUN...

FIGHT FIGHT.

HEH HEH.

STAND BACK, OLD MAN.

IT'S TOO DANGEROUS WITH BARE HANDS!

NO, YOU CAN'T!

AHHH!

AGHH...

AHH-

IS NOW THIS PATHETIC THING...?

A... ARE YOU TELLING ME... T-THAT YOUR COMET-LIKE JAB...

AGHH...

BUT WHAT'S HE DOING HERE IN JAPAN?

I DID HEAR THAT HE RETIRED AFTER BECOMING PUNCH DRUNK,

I...

THE MAN ONCE CALLED THE UNCROWNED EMPEROR AND RISING SUN OF VENEZUELA.

SO THIS IS WHAT BECAME OF CARLOS RIVERA...

S...

EVEN AFTER PUNCH DRUNKENNESS REDUCED YOU TO THIS STATE... YOUR DESIRE TO FIGHT IS STILL BURNING, ISN'T IT...!?

UGH.

NEXT IS LEFT HOOK,

AND HERE'S UPPERCUT...

S-STRAIGHT ..

M- MS. SHIRAKI...

SO THE MAN I SAW BY THE STREET EARLIER,

WAS REALLY CARLOS RIVERA...

WHAT'RE YOU HERE FOR...?

Yabuki

GET THE HELL OUT!

THIS ISN'T A PLACE FOR WOMEN!

GET OUT!

J- JOE, WHAT'S WRONG!? CALM DOWN!

GET THE HELL OUT OR I'LL KILL YOU!

DON'T YOU DARE LOOK AT CARLOS!

D-DON'T MIND HIM. HE'S JUST A LITTLE FATIGUED FROM THE MATCH, THAT'S ALL...

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY...

CONGRA-TULATIONS ON YOUR TITLE-DEFENSE, YABUKI

MAYBE IT'S A LITTLE BELATED BUT,

THANK YOU.

PLEASE, TAKE A SEAT.

SURE.

PASS ME MY BAG!

HEY.

HMPH.

CHANGE INTO THESE.

HERE YOU GO, CARLOS... A GUY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T BE DRESSED IN RAGS LIKE THOSE.

PLEASE SIGN HERE.

HERE'S THE CONTRACT.

O- OF COURSE, OF COURSE!

OHH... THANK YOU VERY MUCH...

THE REST OF YOU SHOULD PACK YOUR STUFF TOO.

IT'S TIME TO GO HOME!

HEH HEH...

WHAT YOU THINK? DOES IT SUIT?

YOU STILL LOVE TO BE STYLISH, DON'T YOU?

EVEN WHEN PUNCH DRUNK,

SINCE THE TITLE-DEFENSE IS OVER, I'M HANDING OVER MY RIGHTS TO THE WORLD TITLE MATCH WITH JOSÉ MENDOZA JUST AS I PROMISED.

R-RIGHT...

WHAT ?

I WAS THINKING OF TAKING CARE OF HIM FOR THE MOMENT...

NOW ABOUT CARLOS RIVERA...

GET THE HELL OUT IF YOU'RE DONE WITH YOUR BUSINESS ALREADY!

THERE'S NO WAY I'D HAND OVER A HELPLESS BABY LIKE CARLOS TO AN ICE-HEARTED WOMAN WHO ONLY CARES ABOUT BUSINESS!

NO WAY IN HELL!

J-JOE! CALM DOWN, YOU'RE BEING RUDE.

U... UU...

PAH...

I'LL DO IT FOR YOU.

ALRIGHT, FACE THIS WAY.

WHAT'S WRONG?

U.. UU...

CAN'T EVEN BUTTON UP?

I TOLD YOU I'LL DO IT!

NO!

RAISE YOUR CHIN.

ALRIGHT,

DAMN IT...

D...

HEY KOUNO! HELP CARLOS BUTTON UP HIS SHIRT!

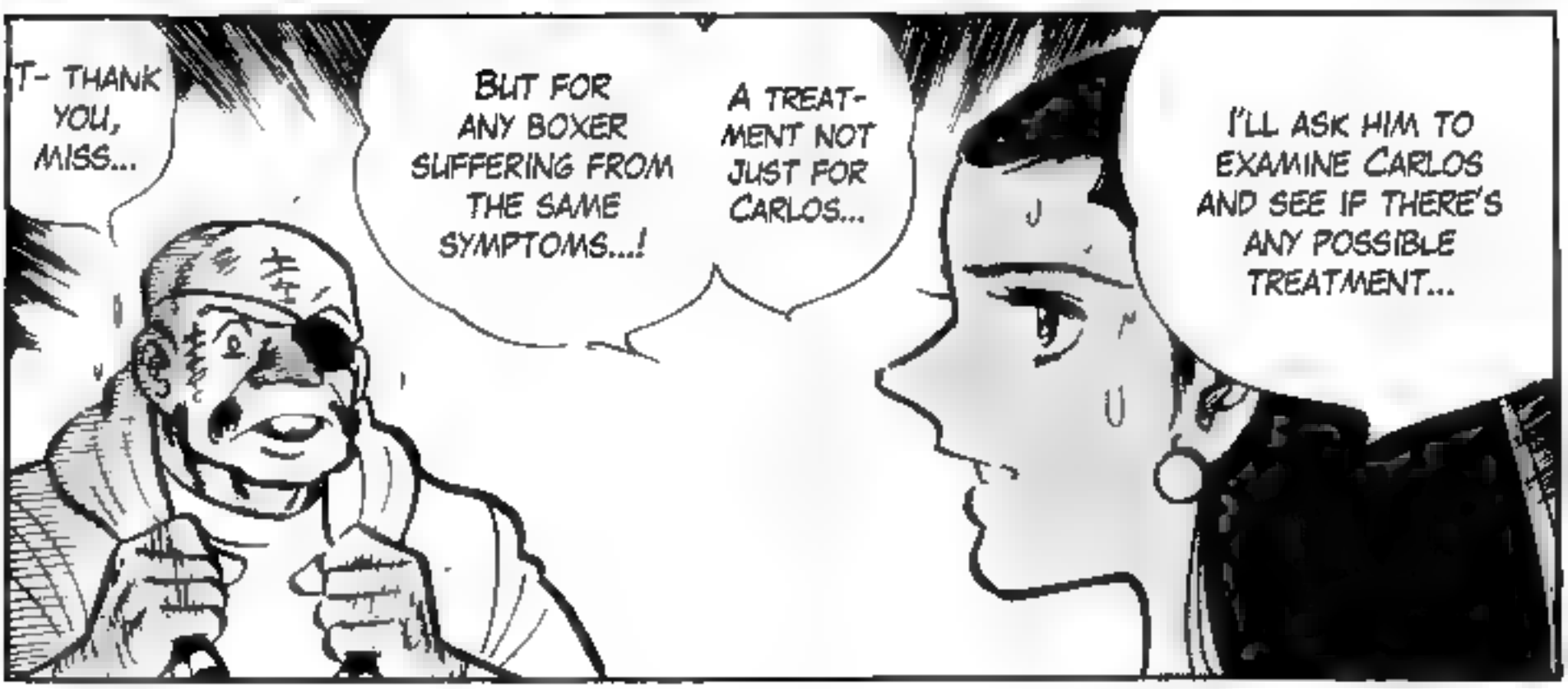
S-SURE...

I SIGNED THE FORM.
HERE,

O- OHH...
I SAID I FINISHED SIGNING, MISS.
UMM...

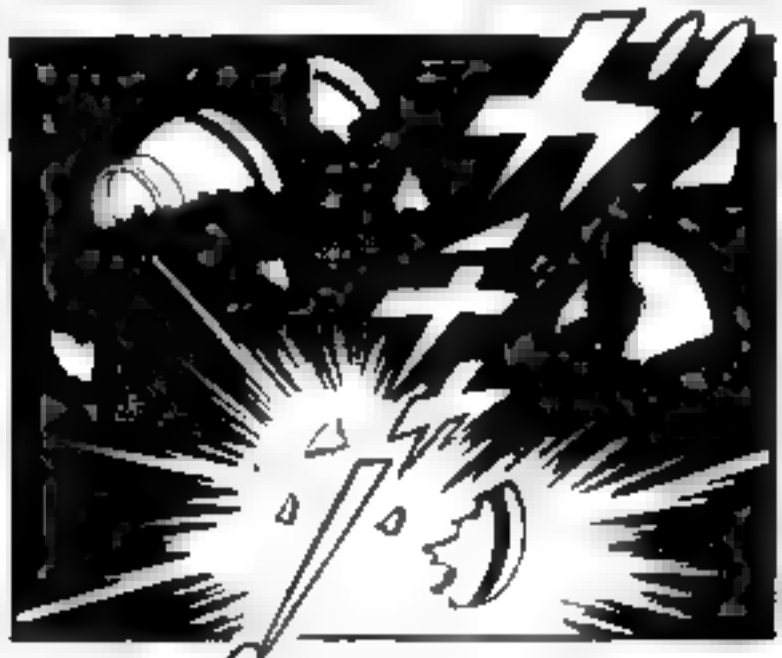
I KNOW A WORLD AUTHORITY ON PUNCH DRUNKENNESS CALLED DR. KEYNISKY.
I...

N- NO...
ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL?
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU SEEM PALE.


T- THANK YOU, MISS...
BUT FOR ANY BOXER SUFFERING FROM THE SAME SYMPTOMS...!
A TREAT- MENT NOT JUST FOR CARLOS...
I'LL ASK HIM TO EXAMINE CARLOS AND SEE IF THERE'S ANY POSSIBLE TREATMENT...

I DON'T THINK IT'S A BAD IDEA TO LET MS. YOUKO TAKE CARE OF CARLOS FOR A WHILE, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

WELL... YOU HEARD HER, JOE.



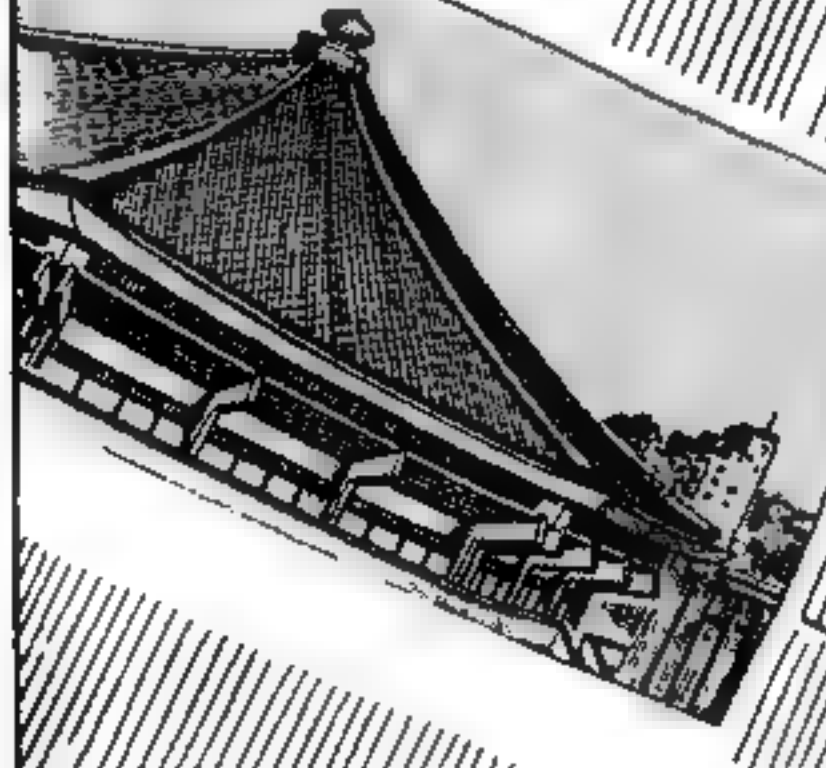
Dec. 22, Friday

José Mendoza vs. Yabuki J

Bantamweight World-Title Match

to be held at Nippon Budoukan!

Champion Mendoza accepts Yabuki Joe's challenge!



Dr. Keynisky, the world's foremost physician for boxers, comes to Japan.

Dr. Keynisky, the world's foremost physician for boxers, comes to Japan.

TOKYO

DR. KEYNISKY?

SINCE IT WAS YOU WHO REQUESTED ME, I FLEW OVER HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT?
AH. HOW ARE YOU, MS. YOUKO?
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU, DR. KEYNISKY!

NO, I DON'T MIND. ASK AWAY.
QUES-TIONS?
I KNOW YOU MAY BE TIRED FROM THE LONG FLIGHT, BUT DO YOU MIND IF I ASK A FEW QUESTIONS RIGHT NOW?

DO YOU MEAN THESE?

BY BUT-TONS,

A PUNCH-DRUNK INDIVIDUAL WILL SHOW ODD DEVIATIONS IN HIS DAILY ACTIVITIES.

WELL, AS I EXPLAINED TO YOU BEFORE IN HAWAII,

WERE TO DO THE BUTTONS ON HIS SHIRT. WHAT SORT OF SYMPTOMS MIGHT HE SHOW?

SUPPOSE A PUNCH-DRUNK BOXER,

HMM?

.....

ONE COMMON SYMPTOM IS TREMBLING HANDS.

BUT THAT WOULD ONLY APPLY TO INDIVIDUALS ALREADY IN AN ADVANCED STATE OF PUNCH-DRUNKEN-NESS...

THUS, DOING THE BUTTONS ON ONE'S SHIRT, OR EVEN FASTENING UP A ZIPPER WOULD BE DIFFICULT.

YOU MAY HAVE MADE A SERIOUS MISEVALUATION ...

I THINK... DR. KEYNISKY...

...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MS. YOUKO?

I TOLD YOU MANY TIMES OVER TO BE CAREFUL WITH YABUKI'S EXAMINATION AND YET...

AT HAWAII,

PARDON?

JOE YABUKI!

OHH!

YABUKI?

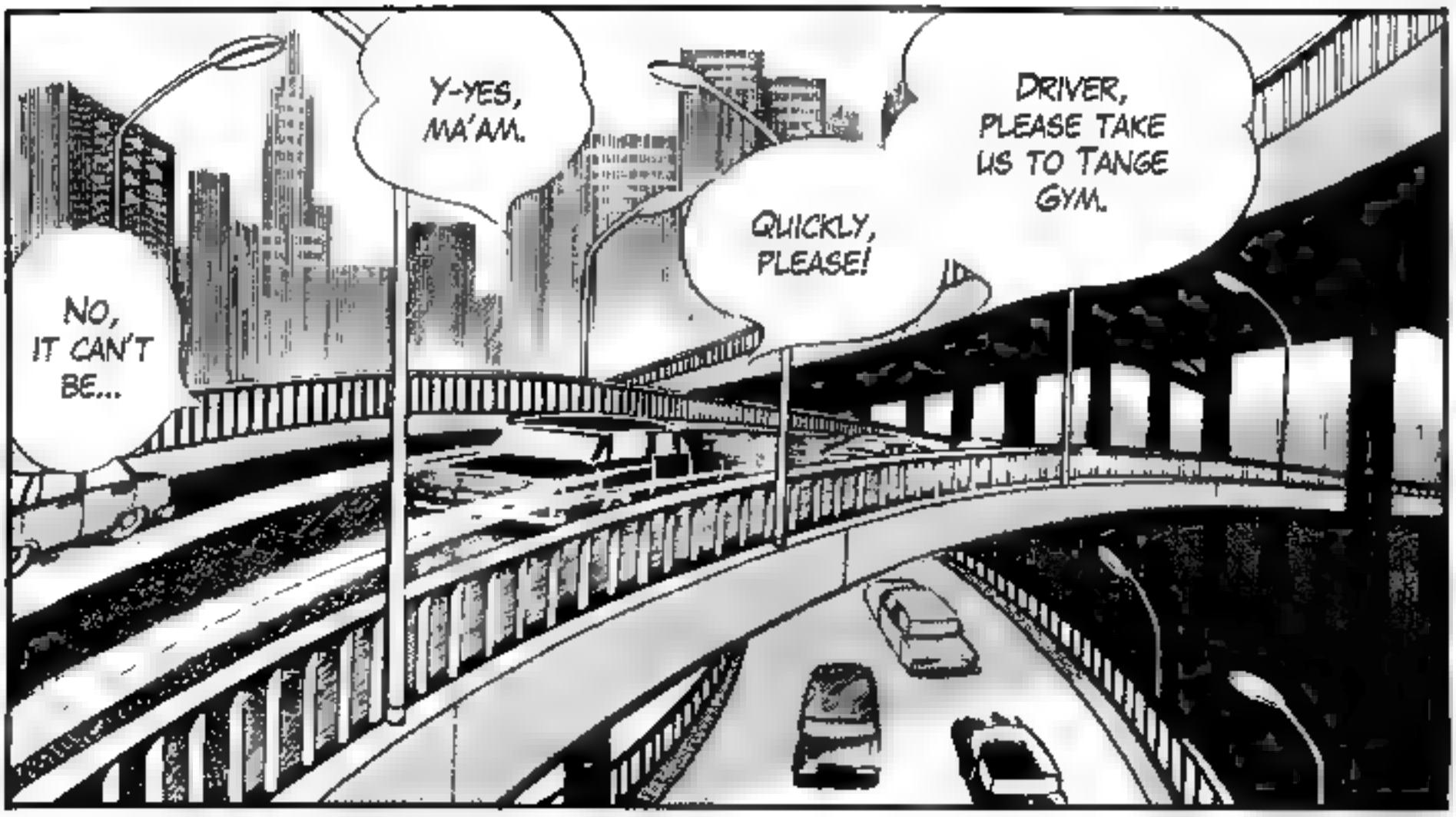
I CAN'T HELP BUT RESENT YOU RIGHT NOW...!

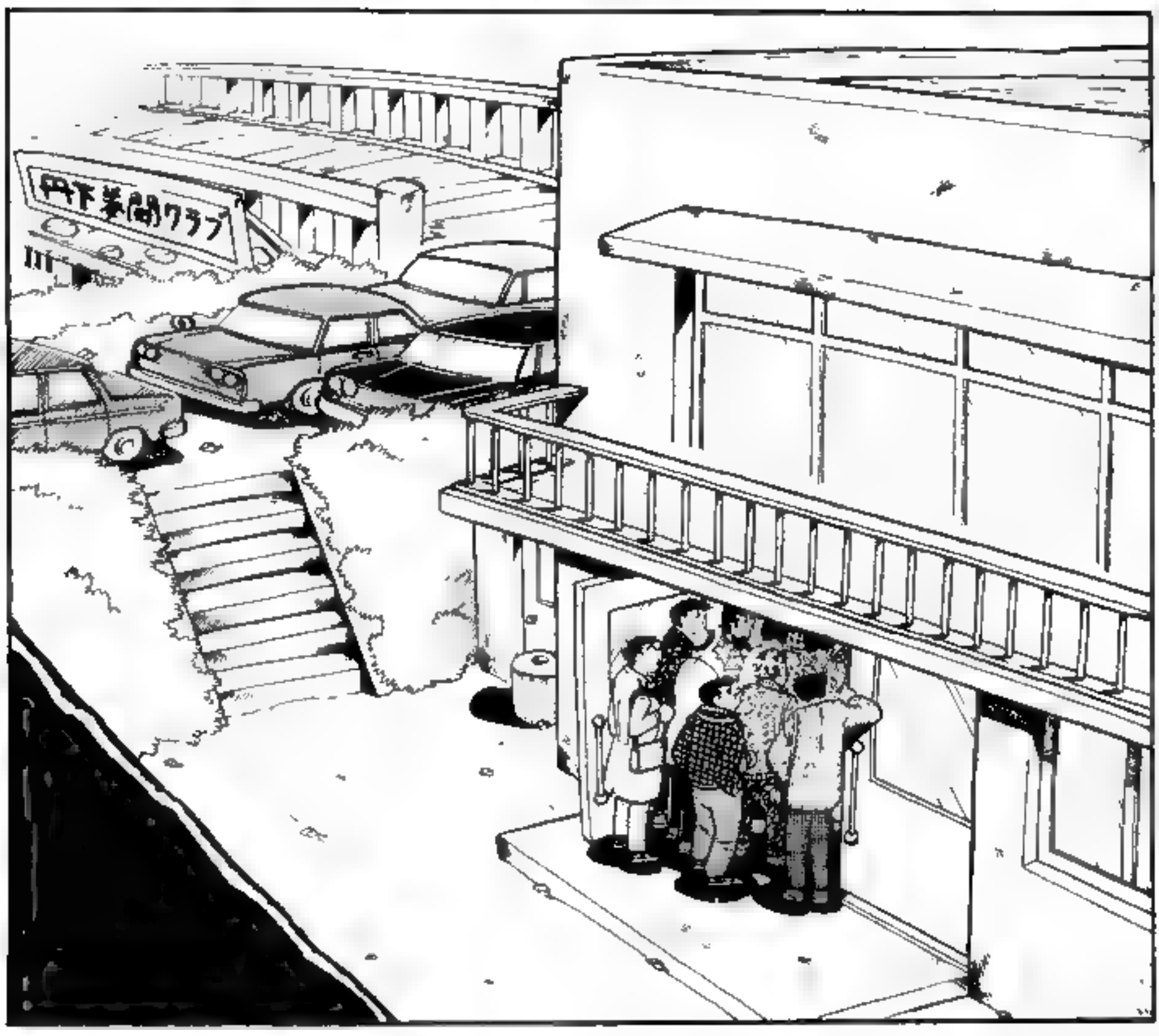
NO! HE'S COMPLETELY PUNCH-DRUNK!

JOE YABUKI IS IN PERFECT SHAPE FOR A B-

HE'S PERFECTLY HEALTHY!

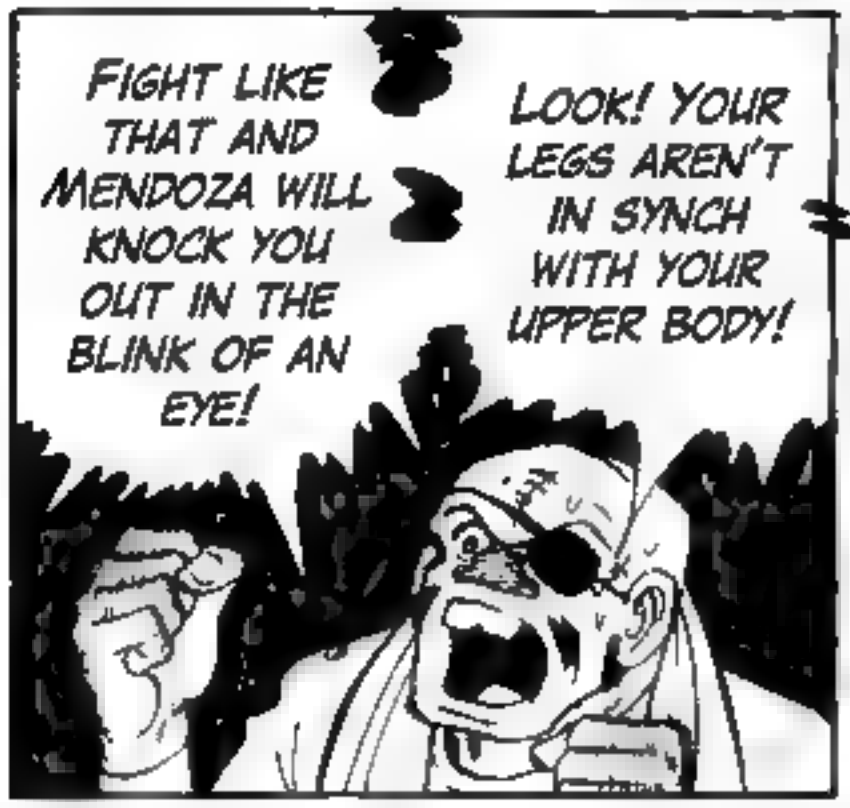
NOT AT ALL!

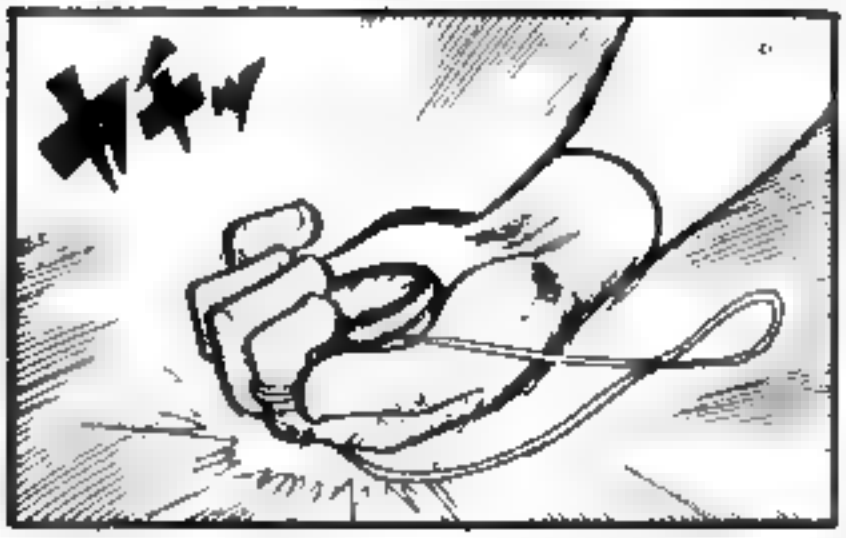

NO, IT CAN'T BE...
Y-YES, MA'AM.
QUICKLY, PLEASE!
DRIVER, PLEASE TAKE US TO TANGE GYM.


丹下拳闘クラブ

NOT ONLY THAT, THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF NEW RECRUITS.
THEY'RE NOT ACTUALLY AFFILIATED WITH THIS GYM. I HEAR THEY GATHERED STRONG BOXERS FROM ALL OVER JAPAN TO HELP OUT AS SPARRING PARTNERS.
LOOKS LIKE YABUKI'S CRANKING UP HIS GEAR TO GET HIMSELF UP ON THE SAME LEVEL AS MENDOZA.
WHOA, LOOK AT HIM GO.
EVEN TANGE'S ALL FIRED UP!
DON'T MAKE YOUR SWING TOO BIG! AND USE MORE JABS!

ﻫﺎ...


FIGHT LIKE THAT AND MENDOZA WILL KNOCK YOU OUT IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE!
LOOK! YOUR LEGS AREN'T IN SYNCH WITH YOUR UPPER BODY!



YOUR HIPS ARE SHAKING TOO MUCH!
YOUR UPPER BODY NEEDS TO BE MORE NIMBLE!

=HUFF=

=HUFF=

=HUFF=

SURE.

YOU THERE! BRING ME A FOOT MAT!

ALRIGHT, TIME! TAKE A ONE-MINUTE BREATHER!

HOW'RE YOU FEELING, JOE?

RAISE YOUR FEET!

COULDN'T BE BETTER. I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE DAY OF THE MATCH TO COME ALREADY, HAHA...

THIS WAY, DR. KEYNISKY.

ドゴォ

ズズズ

=HUFF=

=HUFF=

NEXT UP IS SPARRING!

YOU GUYS GO ON AND GET READY!

OK.

STOP!

ALRIGHT, TIME!

HMM...

REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, I WONDER WHAT YABUKI'S CHANCES OF WINNING ARE...

TANGE SEEMS FIRED UP TOO, BUT...

YABUKI'S BRIMMING WITH ENERGY AS OF LATE, DON'T YOU THINK?

YEAH ...

JOSÉ MENDOZA IS ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM ANY OF YABUKI'S PREVIOUS OPPONENTS.

IT'S GONNA BE A HARD-FOUGHT BATTLE IN ANY CASE.

DO YOU THINK YABUKI REALLY STANDS A CHANCE OF BEATING MENDOZA OR NOT?

MR. TANGE, MAY WE ASK ONE QUESTION?

ACK!

OF COURSE HE STANDS A CHANCE! HE'LL WIN TOO, JUST YOU WAIT!

THAT'S AN ODD QUESTION TO ASK...

THAT'S WHAT I'D LOVE TO TELL YOU REPORTERS.

OR AT LEAST,

FUFU

THOSE AREN'T VERY CONFIDENT WORDS.

HMM...

MENDOZA'S ON A WHOLE 'NOTHER LEVEL.

LIKE ONE OF YOU SAID EARLIER,

BUT THIS FIGHT IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER FIGHT BEFORE.

IT'S HARD TO SAY WHAT'LL REALLY HAPPEN...

HEAP THE GREATEST PRAISES FOR HIM, CALLING HIM A PERFECT BOXER, A FIGHTING MACHINE, AN INHUMAN COMPUTER, AND SO ON...

ALL THE BOXING SPECIALISTS AND MAGA-ZINES,

I TREMBLED AT THE SIGHT OF MENDOZA'S STRENGTH DURING HIS FIGHT WITH SAM IAUKEA.

BACK WHEN I WAS IN HAWAII FOR JOE'S FIGHT,

YEAH, MENDOZA BEAT HIM JUST PAST THE FIRST MINUTE MARK OF ROUND ONE.

AH, HE'S TALKING ABOUT THAT HAWAIIAN FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION, RIGHT?

DESPITE SWEATING ALL OVER FROM THE HEAT OF THAT NIGHT.

EVEN JOE HAD GOOSE-BUMPS ALL OVER,

WHOA...

HE KO'D IAUKEA IN JUST TWO CLEAN PUNCHES.

AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN,

NOT ONLY THAT, MENDOZA SPENT MOST OF THE FIRST MINUTE LETTING IAUKEA PUNCH HIM FREELY.

WINNING OR LOSING ISN'T WHAT TRULY CONCERNS HIM.

JOE'S A GUY WHO GETS MORE FIRED UP THE STRONGER HIS OPPONENT IS.

YABUKI DOESN'T SEEM TO BE SCARED AT ALL OF MENDOZA. IN FACT, HE'S EXCITEDLY TRAINING EVEN HARDER RIGHT NOW, ISN'T HE?

EVEN SO...

HE FEELS HIS PURPOSE OF LIVING JUST FROM THE THRILL OF GIVING IT HIS ALL.

THERE IS ONE RAY OF HOPE...

BUT...

BUT TO BE FRANK, I'M ALSO QUITE TERRIFIED ABOUT THE COMING MATCH.

ME, ON THE OTHER HAND... I'M A LITTLE GREEDIER ABOUT WINNING,

CARLOS?

IT COMES FROM EXAMINING HOW BOTH MENDOZA AND JOE FARED AGAINST CARLOS RIVERA...

HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS...

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

OH?

Even Mendoza, the so-called "perfect boxer," was hesitant towards accepting a challenge from Carlos Rivera.

Yes...

Oh right, the so-called "Uncrowned Emperor" who fought against Yabuki in a huge match held at the Kourakuen baseball stadium.

It's these actions of his that caused the people to give Carlos the nick-name, "Uncrowned Emperor."

That's why the cautious Mendoza avoided the confron-tation!

Even if he really is a perfect boxer, against a serious hard-hitter like Carlos, there's always a chance that one lucky punch might ruin his career.

And so, this Carlos-factor, if you will...

Of course, Mendoza too, fought a match against Carlos and won an easy victory, but Carlos was already a husk of his former self by then.

But Joe fought head-on against the man whom even the world champion was afraid of... Not only that, Joe even managed to cripple him!

Is the lone ray of hope for Joe's chances of winning.

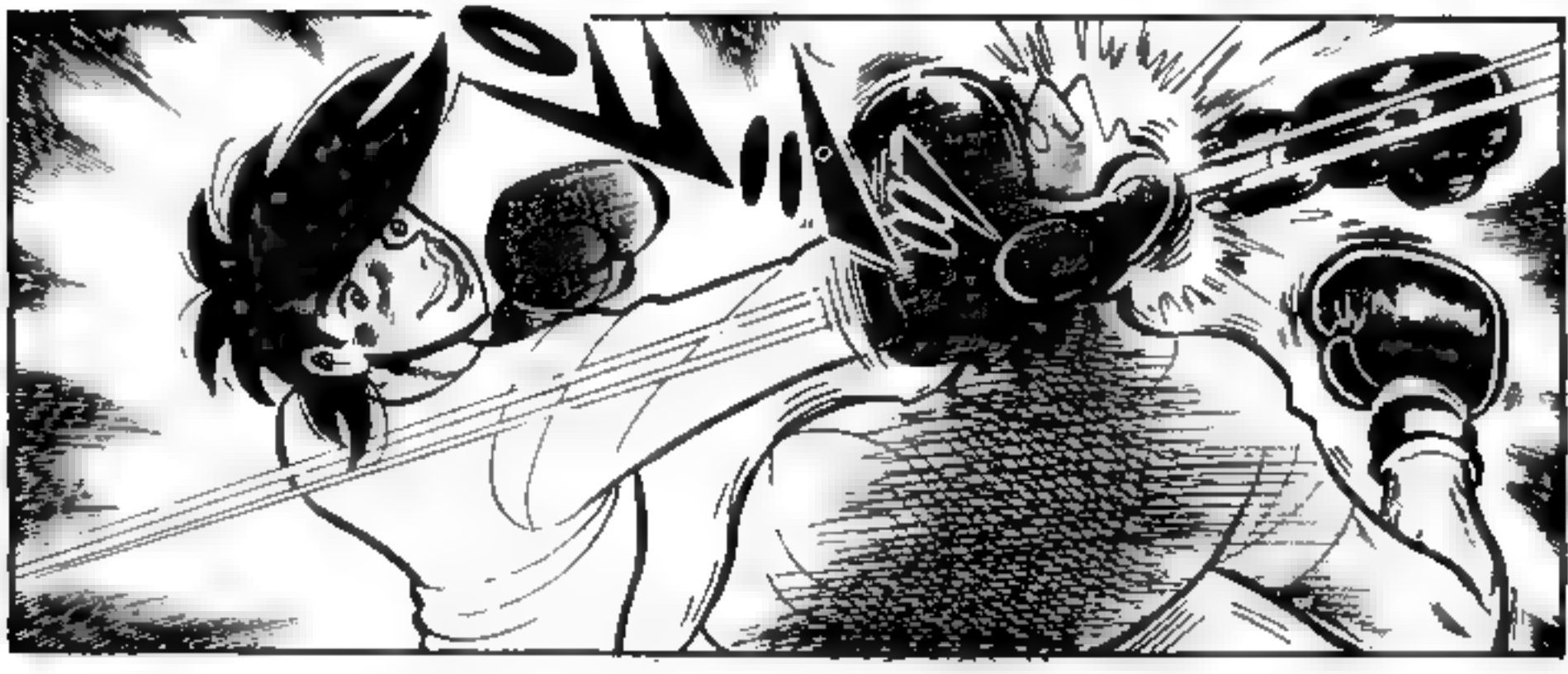
I GUESS YABUKI JOE DOES STAND A CHANCE!

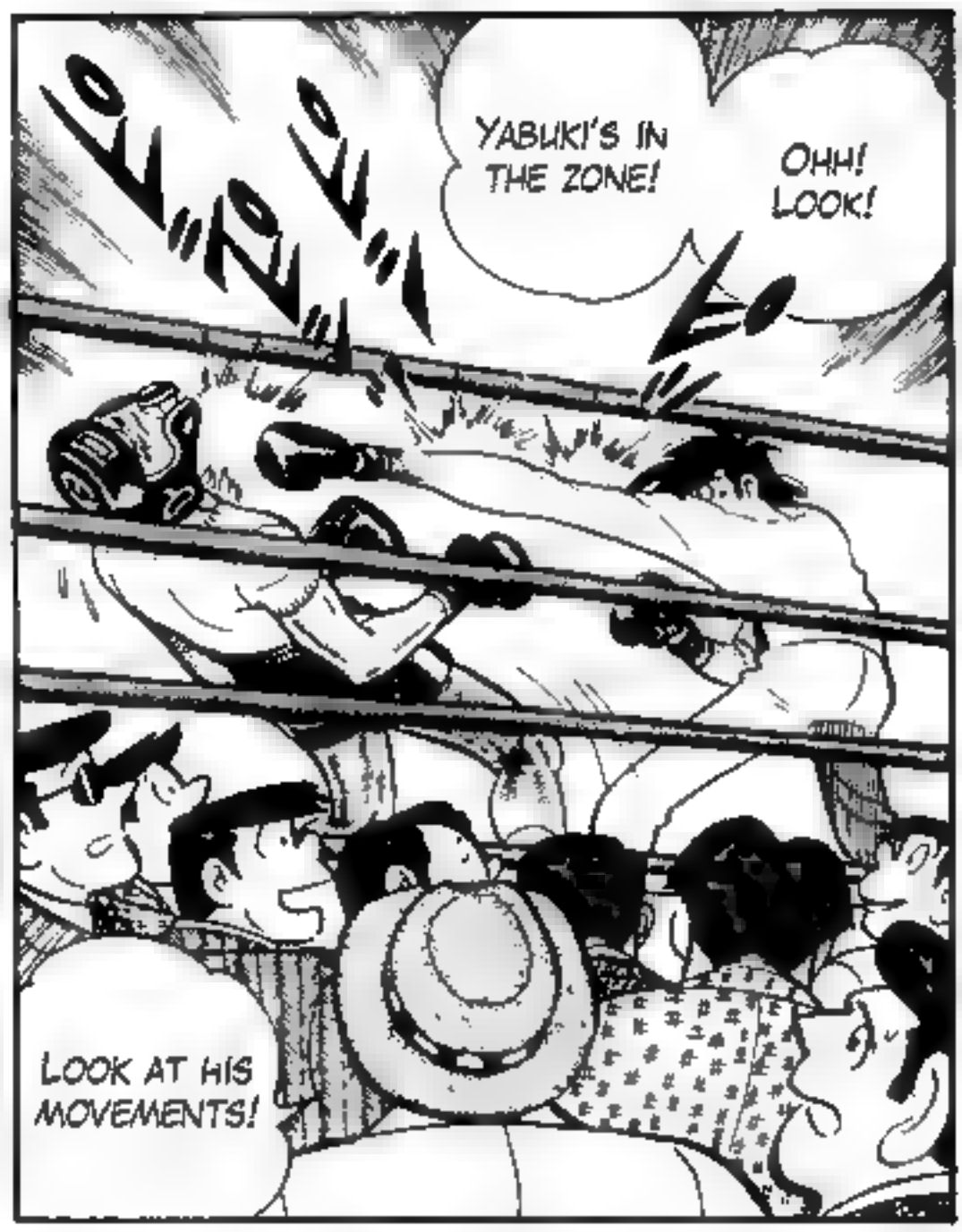
ON THE OTHER HAND, MENDOZA WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR OF NOW GOING UP AGAINST AN OPPONENT WHO BEAT THE MAN HE WAS PREVIOUSLY AFRAID OF!

THAT IS A GOOD POINT.

OHH, I GET IT...

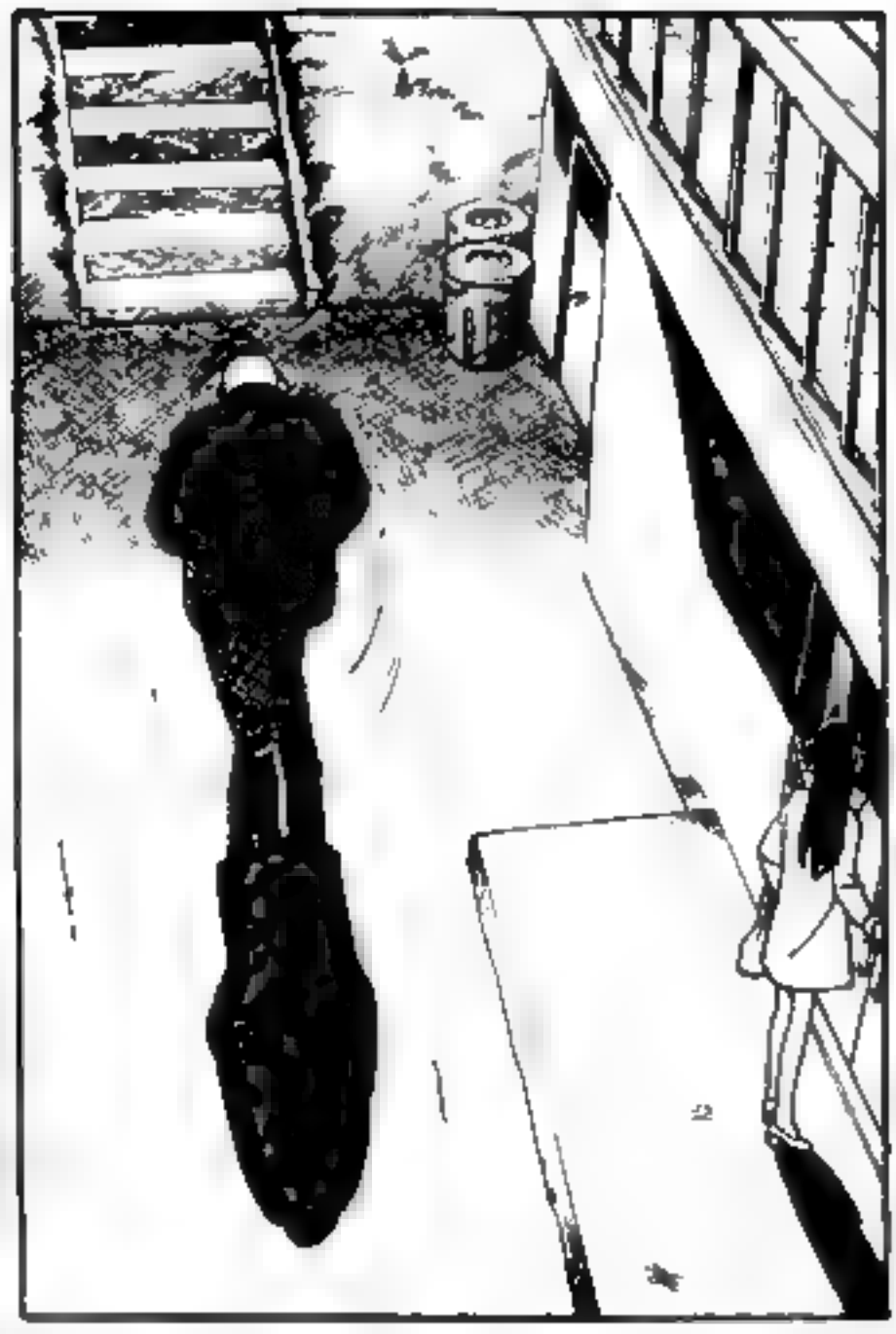
ALRIGHT, LET'S USE THAT AS THE KEY POINT OF OUR NEXT ARTICLE!

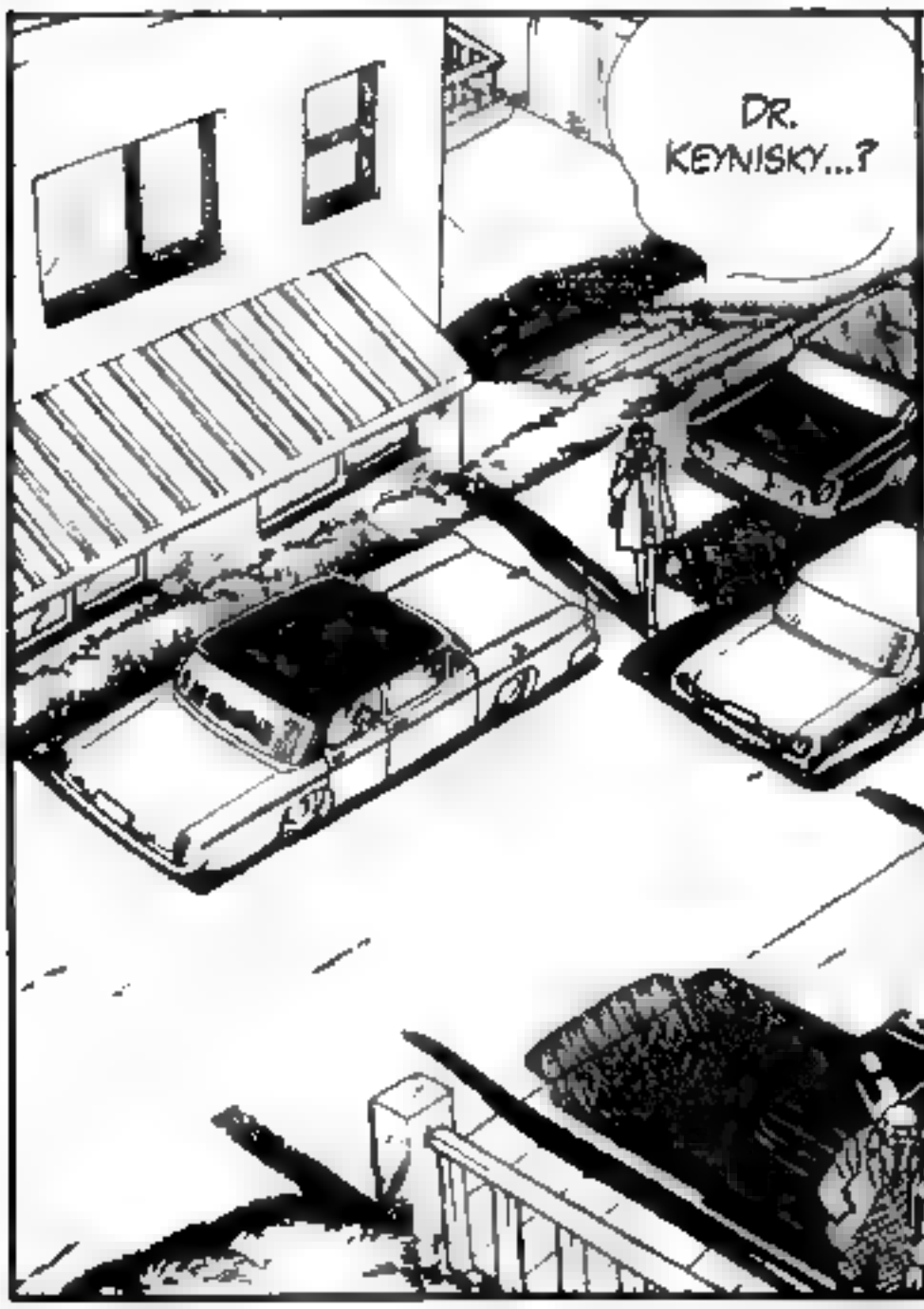



YABUKI'S IN THE ZONE!
OHH! LOOK!
LOOK AT HIS MOVEMENTS!

YOU SAID IT!
IF HE FIGHTS LIKE THAT, IT'S DEFINITELY POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO EVEN KO THE WORLD CHAMP!
WHOA!

.....




DR. KEYNISKY...?

...

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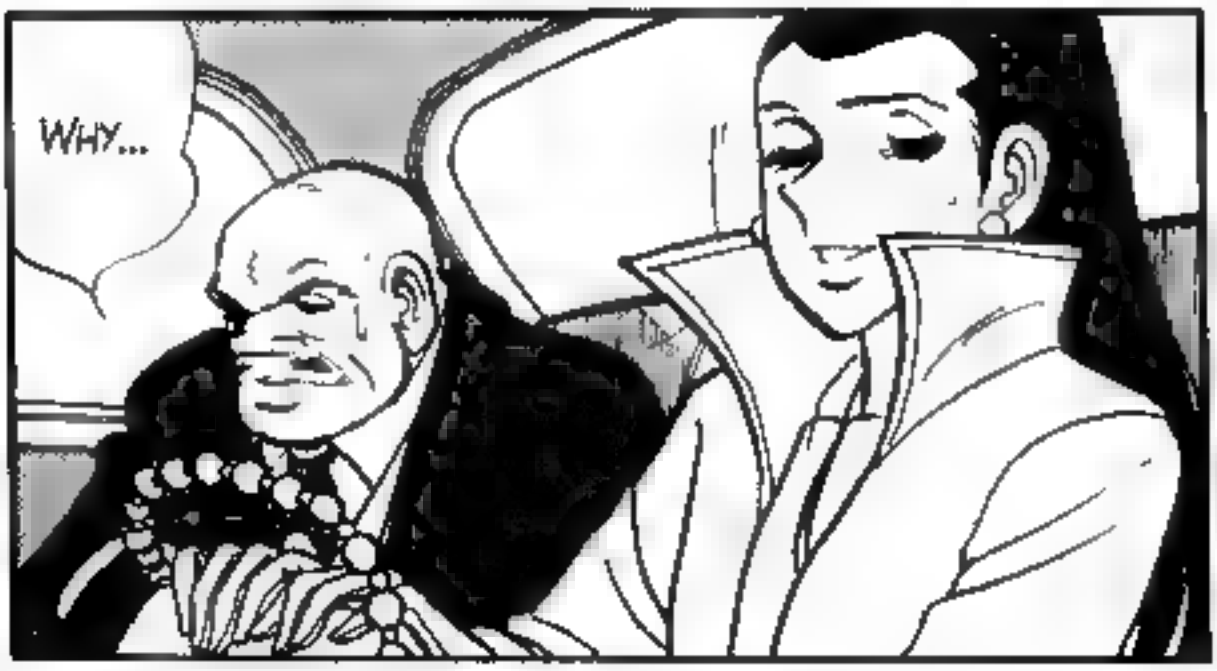
P-PLEASE SAY SOMETHING...
W-WHAT IS IT...?

ARE YOU ADMITTING YOU MADE A MISEVALUA-TION...?
ARE YOU...

I CONFESS I ERRED...
I'M TRULY SORRY, MS. YOUKO...

AS YOU FEARED, JOE YABUKI IS CLEARLY AFFLICTED BY PUNCH-DRUNKENNESS...
YES...

HIS MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT ALL THOSE ACTIVITIES,
AND SPAR AGAINST HIS PARTNER.
I SAW HIM HIT THE PUNCHING BALL, THE SANDBAG,
I CAREFULLY OBSERVED HIM SHADOW-BOXING JUST NOW.


WHY...

HIS SYMP-TOMS ARE SE-VERE...!
MIGHT SEEM IMPRESSIVE AT A CURSORY GLANCE, BUT THEY BETRAY A DISTINCT HINT OF IRREGULARITY.

BACK WHEN YOU SENT ME THE VIDEO OF HIS MATCH AT HAWAII FOR A CAREFUL EVALUATION...!?
WHY DIDN'T I NOTICE THOSE IRREGU-LARITIES,

IN SPITE OF YOUR WARNING, IT WAS EVEN HARDER THAN USUAL TO NOTICE HIS SYMPTOMS...

HIS NATURAL INSTINCTS FOR FIGHTING DEFEATED EVEN MODERN-DAY MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE.

IT'S YABUKI'S WILDNESS...

CONSIDERING HE'S ALREADY IN ITS LATER STAGES, HE SHOULD'VE MOST DEFINITELY SHOWN SIGNS BACK THEN.

ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID ONCE BEFORE?

"EARLY SYMPTOMS FOR PUNCH-DRUNKENNESS ARE DIFFICULT TO DETECT IN BOXERS WHO HAVE A TENSE MENTAL STATE FROM INTENSELY FOCUSING ON A GOAL..."

HIS WILLPOWER BLAZED PAST ALL REASON AND LOGIC...

WITH YABUKI'S MENTAL STATE BURNING EVEN HOTTER THAN USUAL FROM MENDOZA'S PRESENCE,

BECAUSE ON THAT NIGHT OF THE MATCH, HIS GREAT RIVAL JOSÉ MENDOZA WAS SITTING BY THE RINGSIDE.

AND ADVISE THE SCHEDULED WORLD-TITLE TO BE CANCELLED... THAT IS ALL.

THE ONLY THING I CAN DO NOW IS... INFORM THE JAPANESE BOXING COMMISSIONER OF JOE'S CONDITION,

HIS BURNING WILL TO FIGHT SURPASSED CURRENT MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE.

I HAVE NOTHING TO ADD... IT'S JUST AS YOU SAID.

BEING AN UNINVOLVED 3RD PARTY MEMBER, YOUR WORDS WILL GO UN-HEEDED.

YOU MAY BE THE WORLD'S FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON THE HEALTH OF BOXERS BUT,

NO...

YOU'LL BE UNABLE TO ATTAIN THE NECESSARY MEDI-CAL DOCUMENTS TO PERSUADE THE COMMISSIONER TO CANCEL SUCH AN IMPORTANT MATCH.

NOT ONLY THAT, SINCE YABUKI WILL BE DEAD SET AGAINST A PROPER EVALUATION,

I WILL TRY MY BEST TO HAVE HIM GIVE UP ON THE WORLD TITLE-MATCH!

I'LL PERSUADE YABUKI JOE.

JOE? DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLING?

YOU HAVE A CALL FROM YOUKO.

.....

JUST HANG UP.

AGAIN?

SHE SAYS SHE HAS SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU. MAYBE YOU OUGHTA PICK UP THE PHONE.

JOE... IT'S THE 7TH TIME TODAY ALONE.

NAH.

WITH THE MATCH OF A LIFETIME COMING SOON, YOU JUST KNOW SHE'S ONLY GOT BAD NEWS.

YOU KNOW JUST AS WELL AS ME. NOTHIN' EVER GOOD COMES FROM THAT WOMAN BUTTING INTO MY AFFAIRS.

I AIN'T SUFFERING THROUGH EVEN ANOTHER MINUTE WITH HER.

LET ME MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR NOW JUST IN CASE! DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT LETTING THAT WOMAN GET NEAR ME!
'CAUSE THE MOMENT SHE DOES, I'LL SAY TO HELL WITH TRAINING AND LEAVE THIS GYM!

I'LL STOP PICKING UP THE PHONE TOO.
IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL...
IT HURTS TO TURN HER DOWN EVERY TIME.

KOTO
KOTO

Weekly Sports

The King, José Mendoza, Arrives in Jap

The match of the century approaches!

RING RING

RING

RING RING

I'LL BE THERE SHORTLY.

DR. KEYNISKY'S HERE TO SEE YOU.

KNOCK KNOCK

COME IN.

AH, MS. YOUKO!

FOR KEEPING YOU WAITING EVEN THOUGH I WAS THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU OVER...

MY APOLOGIES, DR. KEYNISKY,

AND WHAT ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER?

AND HE'S NEVER AT THE GYM WHENEVER I VISIT.

IF YOU DON'T MIND MY BLUNTNESS... HAVE YOU CONVINCED JOE YABUKI?

EVEN WHEN I TOLD HIM YOU SHARED THE SAME OPINION, HE SAID THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO WITHOUT THE PATIENT'S OFFICIAL MEDICAL RECORD PROVING HIS IMPAIRED CONDITION...

IT'S NO GOOD.

HE WON'T EVEN PICK UP THE PHONE.

NO...

THE CARLOS RIVERA-FACTOR THAT CLUB OWNER TANGE SEEMS TO BELIEVE IN AS HIS SINGLE RAY OF HOPE,

EVEN SETTING ASIDE THE ISSUE OF PUNCH-DRUNKENNESS,

WE MUST HURRY THEN!

BUT THAT'S-

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

IT WAS JOSÉ MENDOZA!

THE ONE WHO CRIPPLED CARLOS RIVERA WASN'T JOE YABUKI!

IS COMPLETELY FALSE!

BUT THAT WAS NOT THE CASE.

THAT BY THE TIME CARLOS FOUGHT WITH MENDOZA,

I TOO PREVIOUSLY HELD THE BELIEF,

HE HAD ALREADY BEEN LEFT PUNCH-DRUNK BY JOE...

AHH!

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS SPECIFIC PART...

THIS X-RAY IMAGE OF CARLOS RIVERA'S HEAD TELLS EVERYTHING.

HERE.

HUFF
HUFF

AND TUCK IN THAT JAW!

STOP DRAGGING YOUR HEELS!

GOOD... NOW SHOW ME SOME GOOD FOOTWORK.

YES, JUST LIKE THAT!

SENPAI,

YOU GOT AN EXPRESS MAIL FROM MS. SHIRAKI.

HUFF

HUFF

WELCOME BACK.

UH HUH...

LET ME SEE.

SINCE YOU KEEP AVOIDING HER AND NEVER PICK UP THE PHONE, SHE'S FINALLY RESORTED TO MAILING YOU INSTEAD.

HM...

DON'T YOU THINK SO?

SOUNDS LIKE SHE HAS SOMETHING REALLY URGENT TO SAY...

...

JUST RIP IT UP!

DON'T LEAVE IT BY MY ROOM!

FINE... I'LL LEAVE IT BY YOUR ROOM.

YOU CAN READ IT AFTER PRACTICE.

...

GOD, THAT WOMAN JUST DOESN'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT!

I'M SICK AND TIRED OF HER ANTICS!

MIGHT AS WELL READ IT JUST IN CASE IT'S SOMETHING BUSINESS-RELATED.

SHE DID HAND OVER HER NEGOTIATION RIGHTS TO THE WORLD TITLE-MATCH...

AGHH!

AH...

J-
JOEE!

I AIN'T TAKIN' RESPONSIBILITY IF YOU GET HURT BY GETTIN' CLOSE TO ME RIGHT NOW!

YOU HAVE TO READ THIS!

LOOK!

DEAR YABUKI JOE...
I REALLY SHOULD BE TELLING YOU THIS IN PERSON BUT SINCE YOU'VE BEEN SO PERSISTENT IN AVOIDING ME FOR SOME REASON, I'VE RESIGNED MYSELF TO WRITING A LETTER INSTEAD.

FINE... I'LL READ IT TO YOU INSTEAD.

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ズビビ～ッ

SO JUST LISTEN CLOSELY!

THIS IS AN INCONTROVERTIBLE FACT AS POINTED OUT BY DR. KEYNISKY, THE WORLD'S FOREMOST EXPERT CONCERNING HEALTH MAINTENANCE FOR BOXERS.

THE ONE WHO LEFT CARLOS RIVERA PUNCH-DRUNK WAS NOT YOU. IT WAS JOSÉ MENDOZA!

I'LL BE AS CONCISE AS POSSIBLE SINCE THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT.

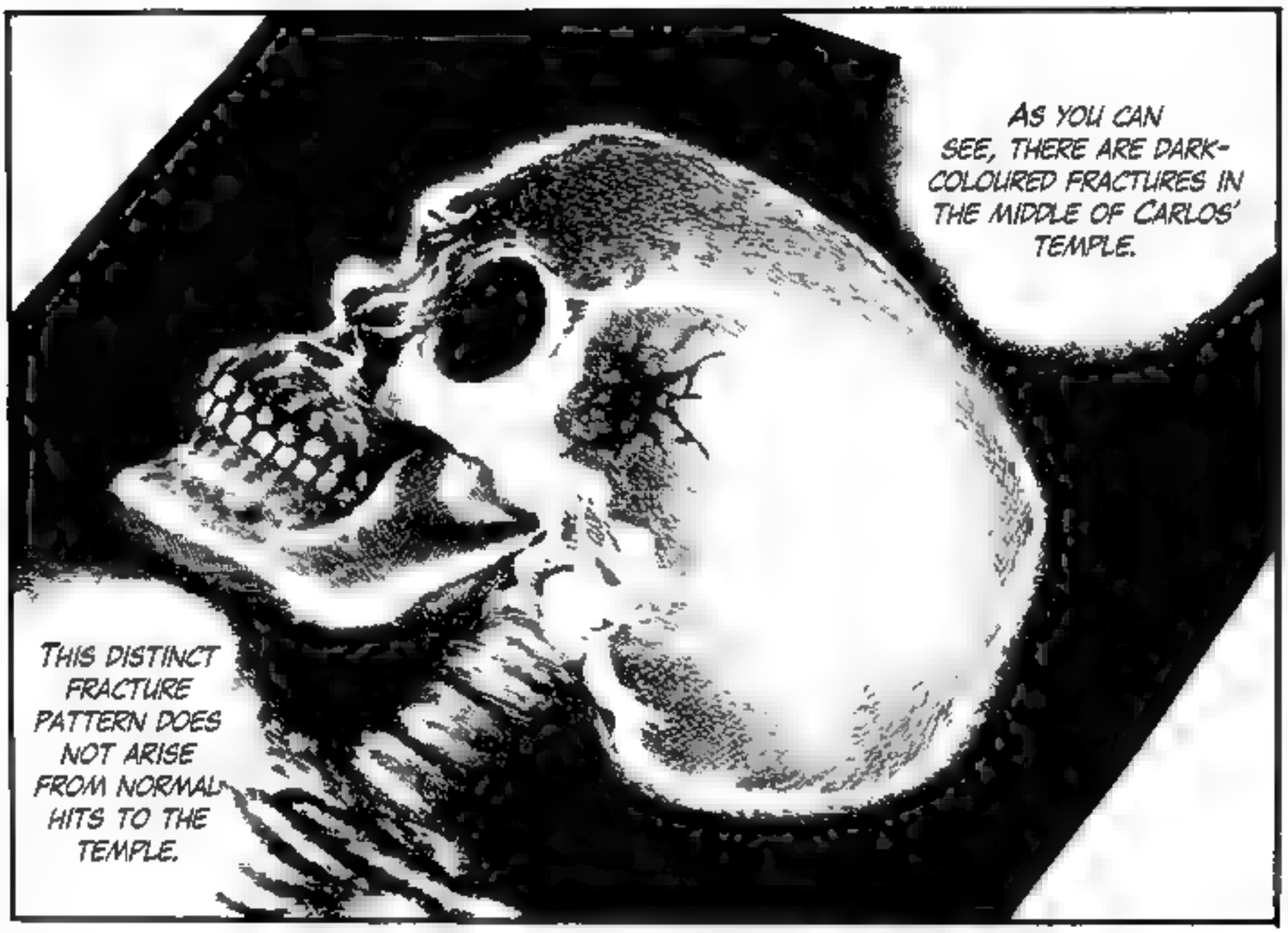
CONSIDERING HOW STRONG CARLOS RIVERA HAD BEEN UP UNTIL THAT POINT, MANY ASSUMED THE FIGHT WITH YABUKI JOE IN JAPAN LEFT HIM PUNCH-DRUNK.

AND SHORTLY UPON HIS RETURN, HE CHALLENGED MENDOZA FOR THE WORLD-TITLE... ONLY TO BE DECISIVELY HANDED A KO-LOSS IN ROUND ONE.

IT'S TRUE THAT CARLOS TRIPPED UP ON THE STAIRWAY TO HIS PLANE BACK TO VENEZUELA.

I HAVE ATTACHED THIS IMAGE IN THE MAIL.

HOWEVER... A SINGLE X-RAY IMAGE TAKEN BY DR. KEYNISKY OVERTURNS THAT ENTIRE THEORY.


As you can see, there are dark-coloured fractures in the middle of Carlos' temple.
This distinct fracture pattern does not arise from normal hits to the temple.

No matter how many times I replay the video-footage of your fight with Carlos, you never once threw a corkscrew punch to Carlos' temple!

I'm sure you already understand the rest of what I have to say.

It's a clear sign of a corkscrew punch, a high-level punch that increases damage by adding additional spin, just like a corkscrew.

WAS WITHOUT A DOUBT, A CORKSCREW PUNCH TO THE TEMPLE!

HOWEVER,

THE PUNCH THAT MENDOZA KNOCKED CARLOS OUT WITH,

THE DREADFUL FRACTURE LEFT BY MENDOZA IS WHAT'S TRULY RESPONSIBLE FOR TURNING CARLOS INTO A CRIPPLE WHO CANNOT EVEN REMEMBER HIS OWN NAME!

CARLOS TRIPPING ON THE STAIRS DURING HIS FLIGHT BACK HOME IS MERELY A LIGHT SYMPTOM OF PUNCH-DRUNKENNESS THAT ANY BOXER MIGHT SHOW AFTER A HARD-FOUGHT MATCH.

AND SO I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO MEET WITH YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BUT I HAVE AN EVEN MORE SHOCKING FACT THAT I MUST TELL YOU.

THIS FACT... MUST SURELY COME AS A SHOCK TO YOU.

"SINCERELY, SHIRAKI YOUKO."

"OTHERWISE, IT IS NOT AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY AN IRREVERSIBLE TRAGEDY WILL HAPPEN."

...

HAHAHA...

HAHA

THIS IS NOTHING TO LAUGH AT!

JOE...

HA...

WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS "EVEN MORE SHOCKING FACT" IS!

MEET YOUKO RIGHT AWAY!

WAS THE FACT THAT IT WAS YOU WHO BEAT THE MAN EVEN THE "PERFECT BOXER" WAS AFRAID OF!

T-THE ONLY THING WE HAD GOING FOR US...

THAT PSYCHO-LOGICAL ADVANTAGE IS NOW GONE!

NOTHING GOOD EVER HAPPENS WHENEVER THAT LADY MISFORTUNE IS INVOLVED...

WHAT'D I SAY...

WE BETTER GET READY TO GO OUT.

IN ANY CASE,

W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING, JOE...?

JUST... DONE!

I'M DONE.

THERE'S NO NEED TO SEE HER.

AH...

TODAY'S THE DAY OF NISHI AND NORIKO'S WEDDING.

DID YOU GO SENILE, OLD MAN? IT'D BE SAD IF YOU ACTUALLY FORGOT.

HAHA HAHA!

HAHA... TO THINK NISHI'S BECOMING A MARRIED MAN...

NISHI! THAT DUMB OL' HIPPO!

HAHAHA!

AHHH!

SO HOW'S JOE DOING?

HEY, MR. BOXING! THAT WORLD TITLE-MATCH IS AWFULLY CLOSE, INNIT?

GUESS WE ALL GOTTA GO AND ROOT FOR HIM AGAIN.

HE'S. FINE, I SUPPOSE.

STOP STANDIN' AROUND OUTSIDE AND HURRY INSIDE!

HEY, THE CEREMONY'S STARTIN'!

HEY! A KID LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T BE CLIMBING UP THERE!

MOVE OVER!

HA, THIS GRAMP'S ALREADY DRUNK OFF HIS ASS!

YOOHOO!

LOOK, IT'S THE BRIDE AND GROOM!

HERE THEY COME!

SSHH! NORIKO AND NISHI ARE COMING!

DON'T THEY MAKE A LOVELY COUPLE?

WHOA, NORIKO'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

WOW...

SSHH!

S-STOP IT, JOE...

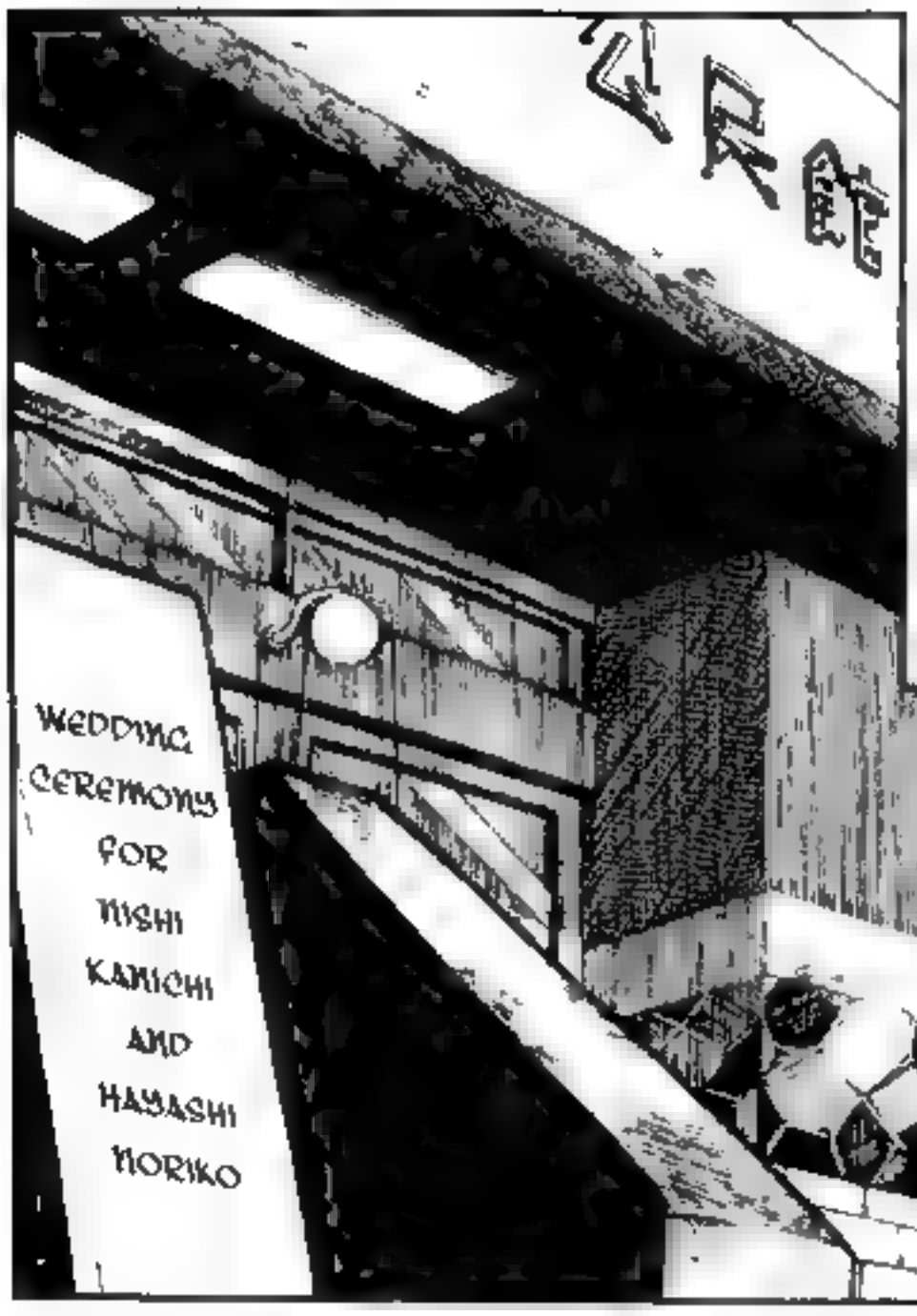
LOOKIN' GOOD, LADY-KILLER!

STOP STANDIN' SO STIFF AND WIPE THAT DUMB SMILE OFF YOUR FACE!

TRY TO LOOK A LIL' MORE SHARP OUT THERE!

PLEASE PLACE THE RING ON YOUR BRIDE.

STOP CRYIN', DAMMIT! TODAY'S A DAY TO CELEBRATE! ...SNIFF!
SNIFF... SNIFF...


WEDDING CEREMONY FOR NISHI KAMICHI AND HAYASHI NORIKO

DOES THAT CAMERA EVEN WORK?
SAY CHEESE!
LOOK THIS WAY...

L-LET'S ALL GIVE HIM OUR UNDEVOTED ATTENTION.

AHAHA-HAHA!

NONE OTHER THAN YABUKI JOE, THE PACIFIC BANTAMWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION AND A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE GROOM.

T-T-THE SPITCH WILL BE GIVEN BY,

AHEM. I-IT IS NOW T-T-THE TIME FOR THE GUEST SPITCH.

IT'S CALLED A SPEECH, NOT A SPITCH!

ホッ…!

CONGRATS, YOU TWO.

AND NORIKO...

YO NISHI!

COUGH!

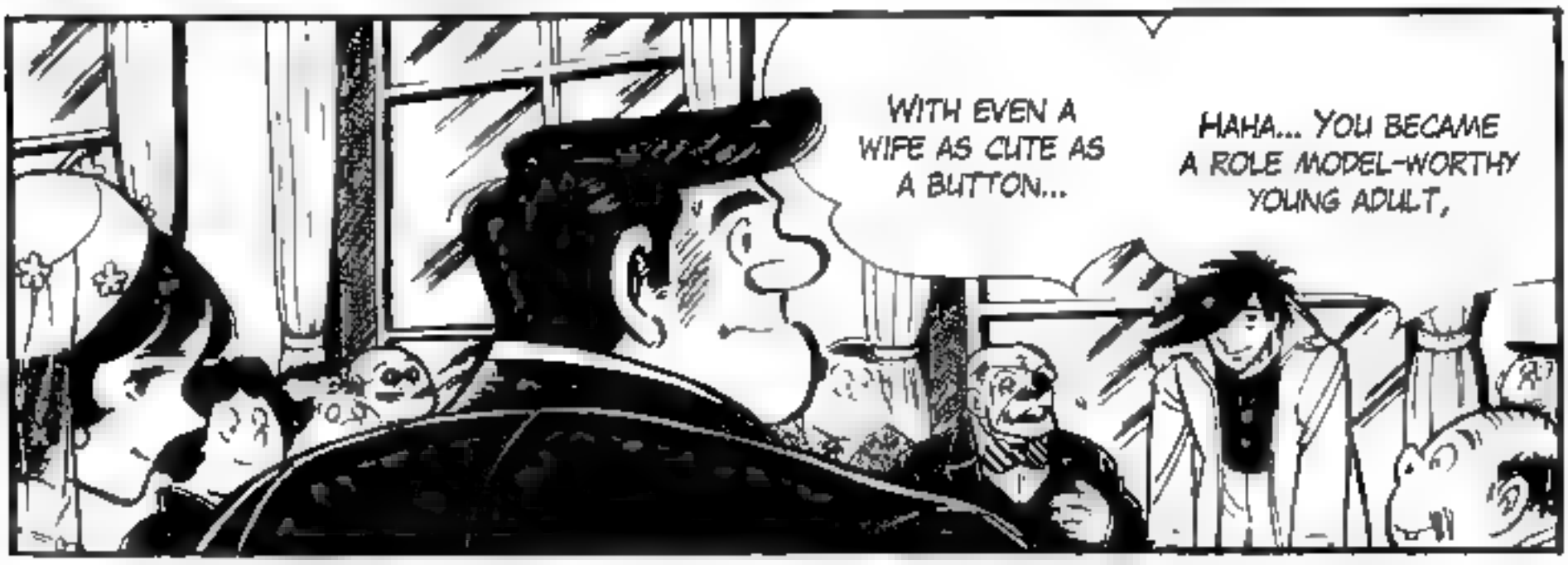
JUV-

IT WAS BACK IN JUVIE WHEN THE TWO OF US MET FOR THE FIRST TIME.

NISHI.

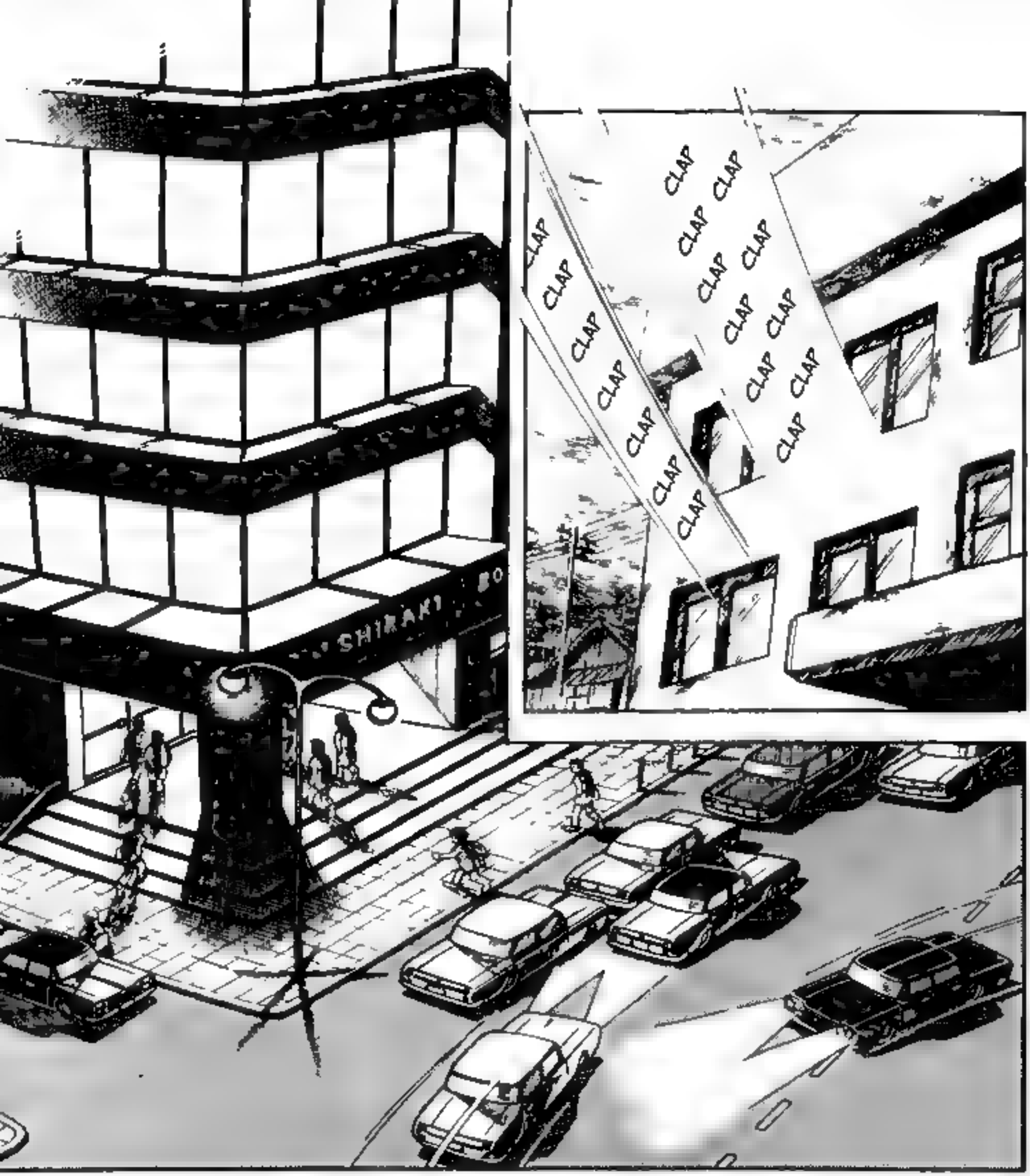
REMEMBER THAT SONG THEY USED TO SING ABOUT THE TOKYO JUVIE?
YONDER CITIES AND CIVILIZATION... IS A HELL THAT EXISTS ON THIS WORLD...!
J-JOE..!
CUT IT OUT, YOU IDIOT!

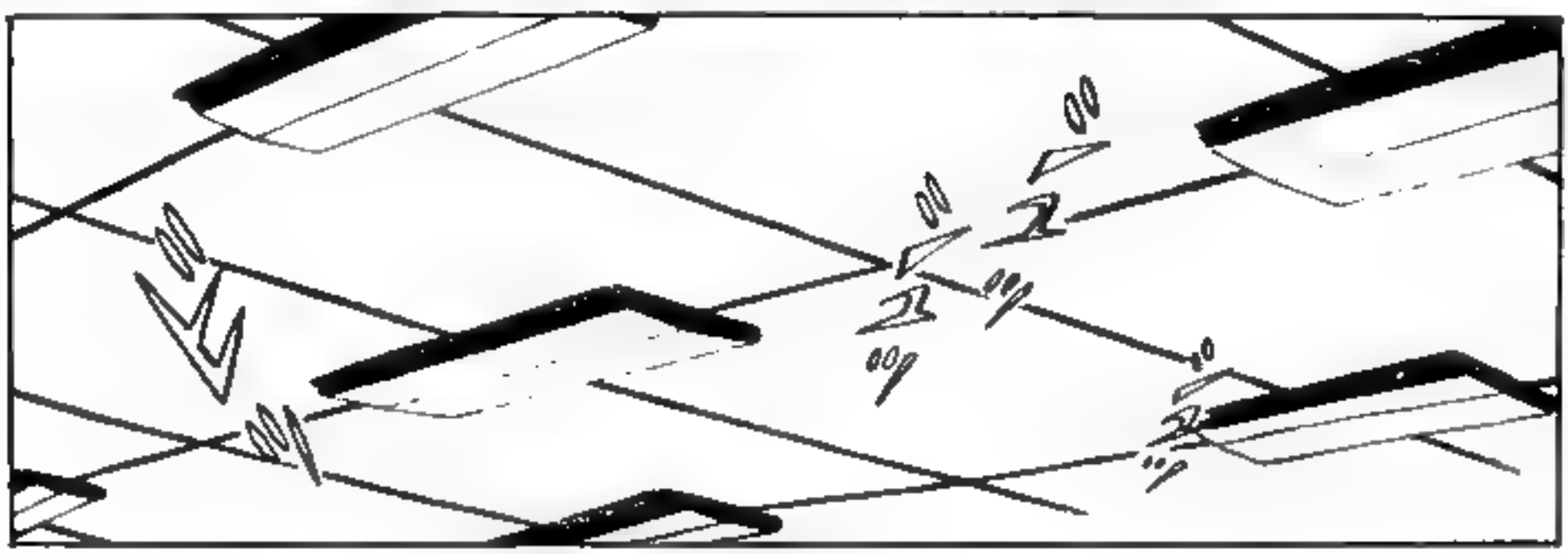
AND WHILE THAT BECAME THE LINE OF WORK I FOLLOWED... YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND ..
WE BEAT THE HELL OUTTA EACH OTHER, DIDN'T WE...?

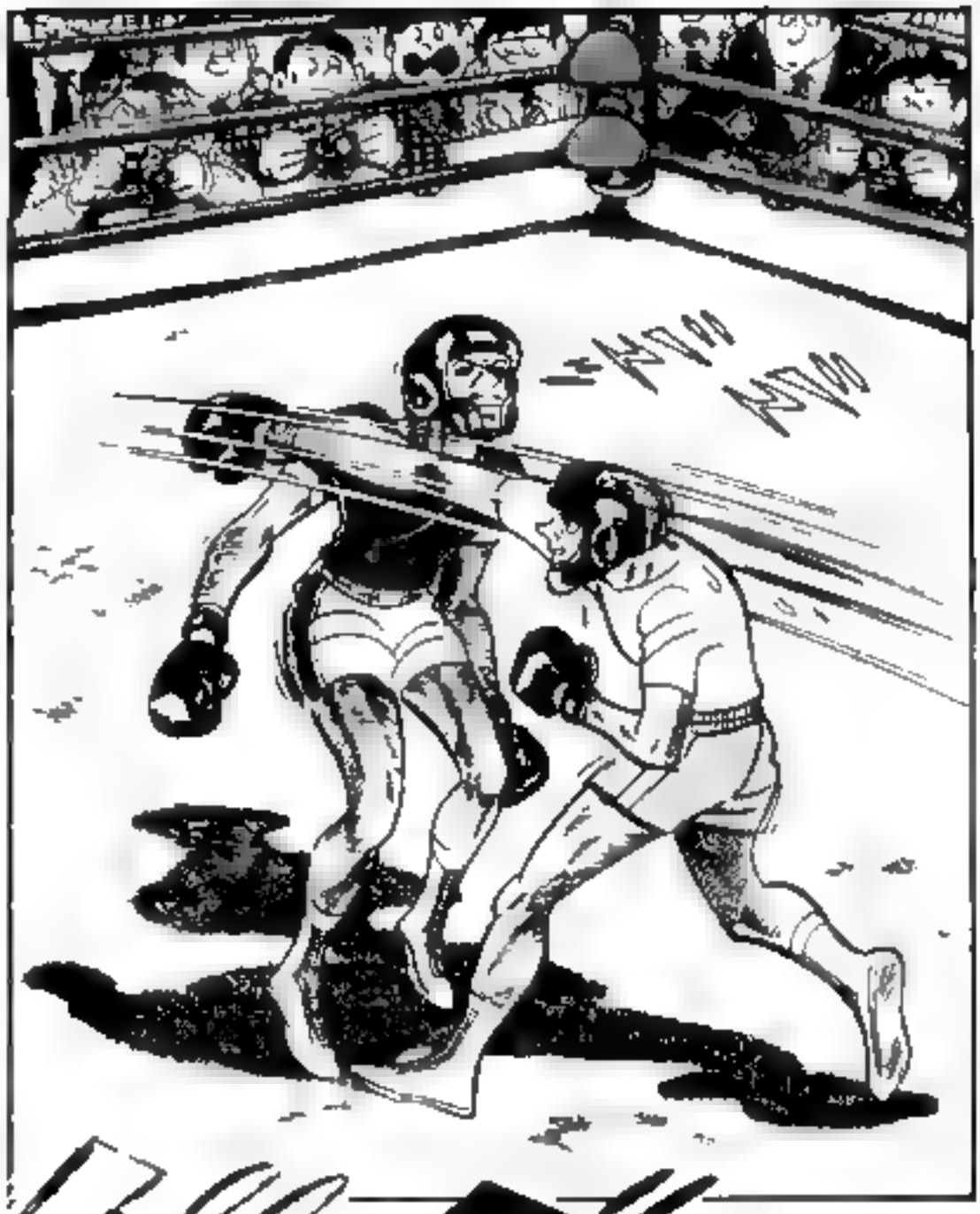

WITH EVEN A WIFE AS CUTE AS A BUTTON...
HAHA... YOU BECAME A ROLE MODEL-WORTHY YOUNG ADULT,

....

HOH HOH
WELP! HAVE A GOOD LIFE!


SHIRAKI
CLAP





THE CORKSCREW PUNCH!

T-THERE IT IS!

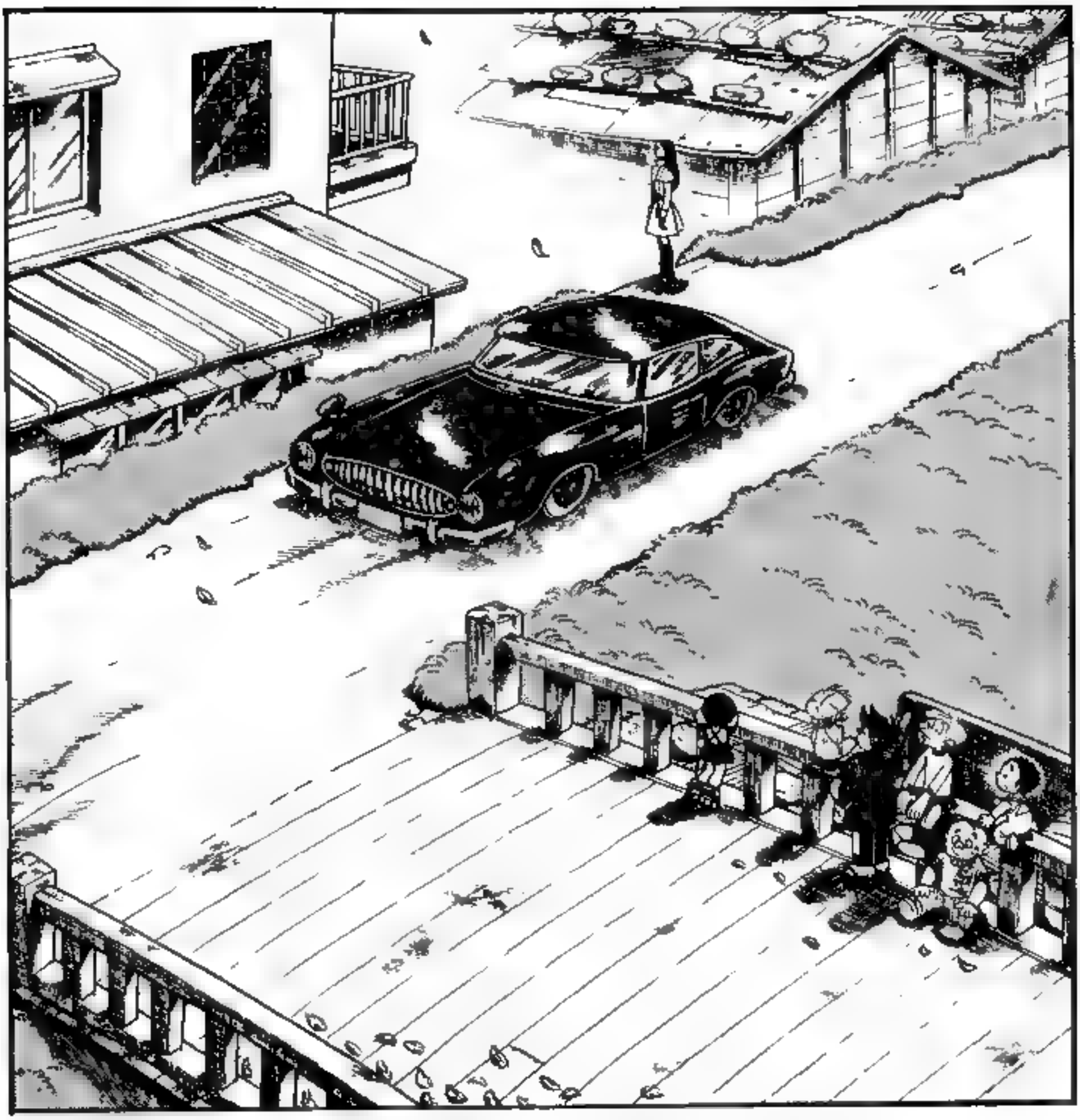
WITH A PUNCH LIKE THAT, HE'S NEVER GONNA HAVE ENOUGH SPARRING PARTNERS.

WHAT A HIT...

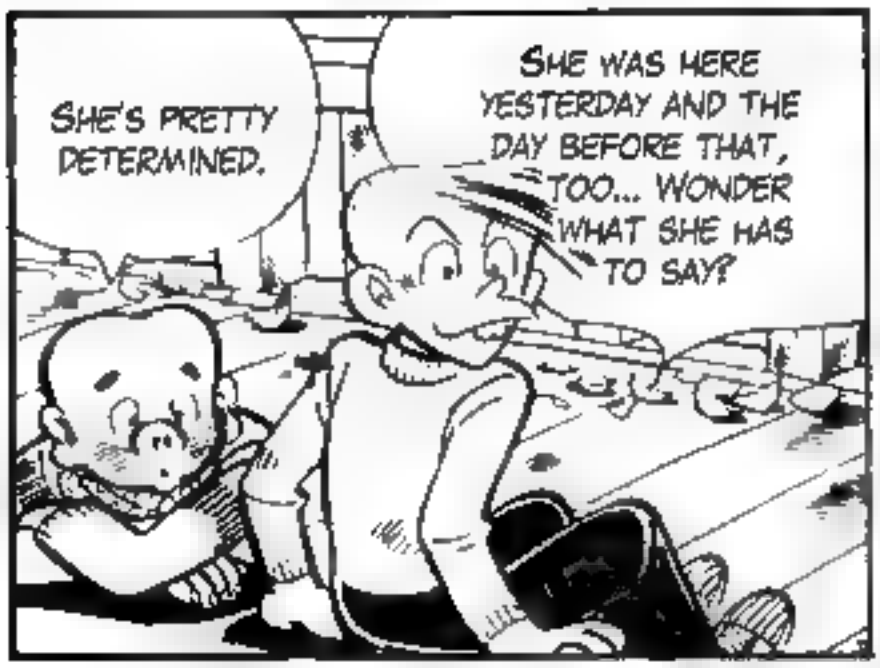
MOTHER OF PEARL... IS HE REALLY WEARING 12OZ. GLOVES?

IT'LL BE A DANGEROUS FIGHT FOR HIM, ALRIGHT...

I'VE HEARD STORIES BUT SEEING IT FIRST-HAND IS SOMETHIN' ELSE, I TELL YA WHAT. YABUKI'S GONNA HAVE A TOUGH TIME GETTING BACK UP IF HE TAKES THAT TO THE FACE, NO MATTER HOW TOUGH HE IS.



SHE'S HERE NOW SINCE SHE KNOWS JOE USUALLY GOES FOR A RUN RIGHT-AROUND THIS TIME.
HM..


SHE'S PRETTY DETERMINED.
SHE WAS HERE YESTERDAY AND THE DAY BEFORE THAT, TOO... WONDER WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY?

LOOK,
SHE'S HERE AGAIN TODAY.

WHO CARES, JUST IGNORE THAT CRUSTY WOMAN!

I DON'T SEE WHY BROTHER JOE CAN'T GIVE HER A MINUTE OF HIS TIME.

SERVES YOU RIGHT!

MAN, IT SURE IS COLD ALL OF A SUDDEN!

WHOA-

LI-UMM NOTHING...

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY BEHIND MY BACK!?

WHAT?

HEY, WE'RE GOING!

LET'S GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE WE CATCH A COLD.

LET'S GO FOR SOME UDON!

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ゾ…

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IS IT RAINING?

HUH?

WHAT?

WHAT IS IT?

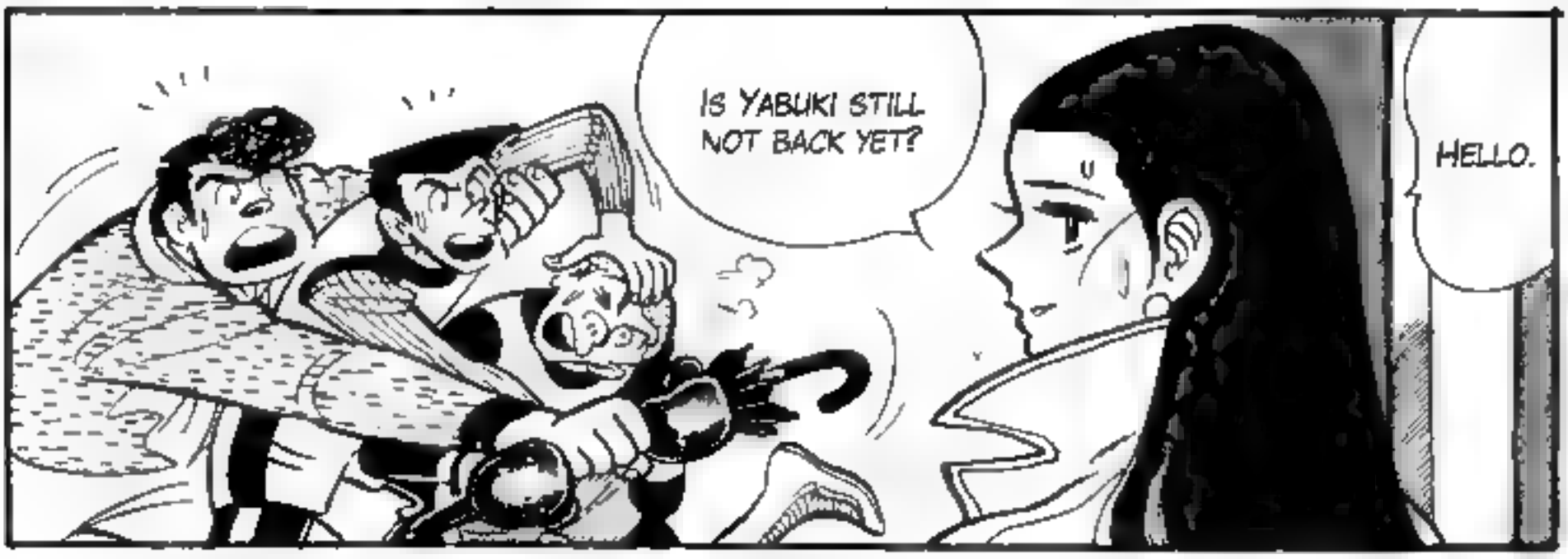
HEY, GUYS...

WHOA, IS SHE *STILL* OUTSIDE?

I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HER.

I'M GONNA GO OUT AND GIVE HER AT LEAST AN UMBRELLA.

DON'T BUTT IN! I SAID I'D GIVE IT TO HER FIRST!
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! I'LL BRING HER THE UMBRELLA!
N-NO! LET ME GIVE HER THE UMBRELLA!


IS YABUKI STILL NOT BACK YET?
HELLO.

HAHA...
H- HE'S NOT BACK YET TOO...

AND WHAT ABOUT MR. TANGE?

AHA... HAHAHA!
N-NOPE, NOT BACK YET!
UMM.

WHERE?

I- I THINK IT'S SOMEWHERE FAR THOUGH... YEAH..

W-WE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHERE...

LI- UMM...

TRAINING?

YES, TRAINING.

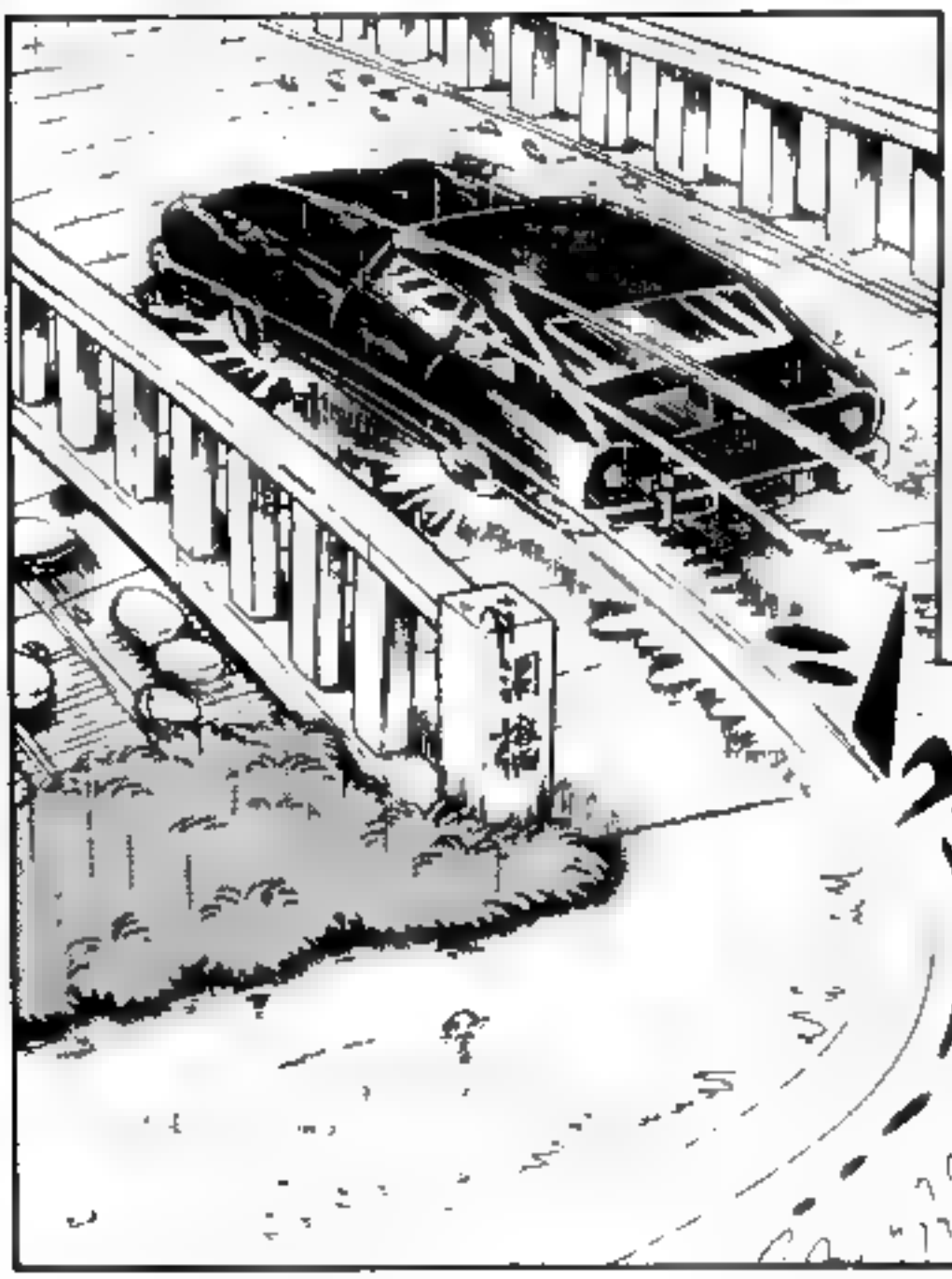
I- IN OTHER WORDS... THOSE TWO ARE STILL AT THEIR TRAINING CAMP.

S- SORRY..

I SEE...

HE REALLY DOES DISLIKE ME, DOESN'T HE... HAHA...

HE'S NEVER EVEN ONCE GONE ON A TRAINING CAMP BEFORE...



MAN, I HATE HIM!

WHY'S HE SO FREAKIN' COLD TO HER!?

GODDAMN IT, YABUKI! WHAT A WASTE!

RICH AND BEAUTIFUL!

SHE GONE?

SMOOCH!

HUG HER LIKE THIS!

IF IT WERE ME, I'D OPEN MY ARMS TO HER AND...

GOOD. CALL DOWN JOE.

AHAHAHA...

W-WE TOLD HER YOU WERE OUT TRAINING JUST AS YOU TOLD US TO!

Y-YES, SIR!

THE EMPEROR JOSE MENDOZA IN PERFECT CONDITION

TERRIFYING PERFORMANCE AT PUBLIC TRAINING SESSION!

A DREADFULLY DESTRUCTIVE BLOW, THE CORKSCREW PUNCH!

OK...

IT'S TIME TO WORK UP A SWEAT.

FINALLY,

MS. SHIRAKI'S GONE HOME.

SENPAI.. THE OLD MAN'S CALLING FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS.

WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME!

STOP GRUMBLING AND GET ON THE RING!

YEAH, I KNOW...

CAN'T EVEN GET SOME DECENT PRACTICE TIME WITH THAT WOMAN LURKING AROUND HERE.

JEEZ.

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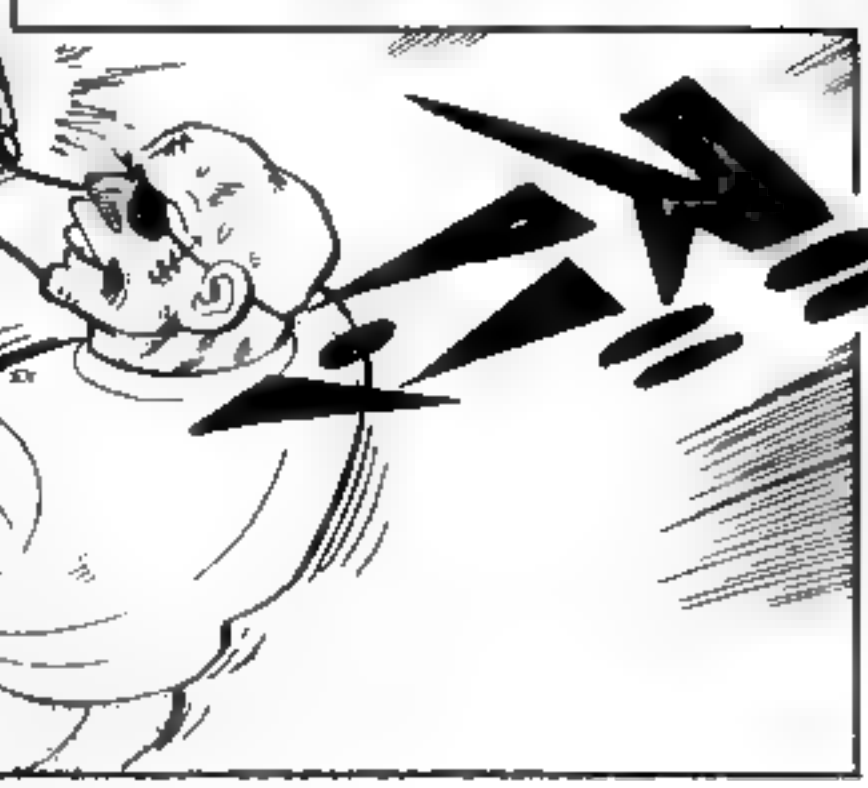
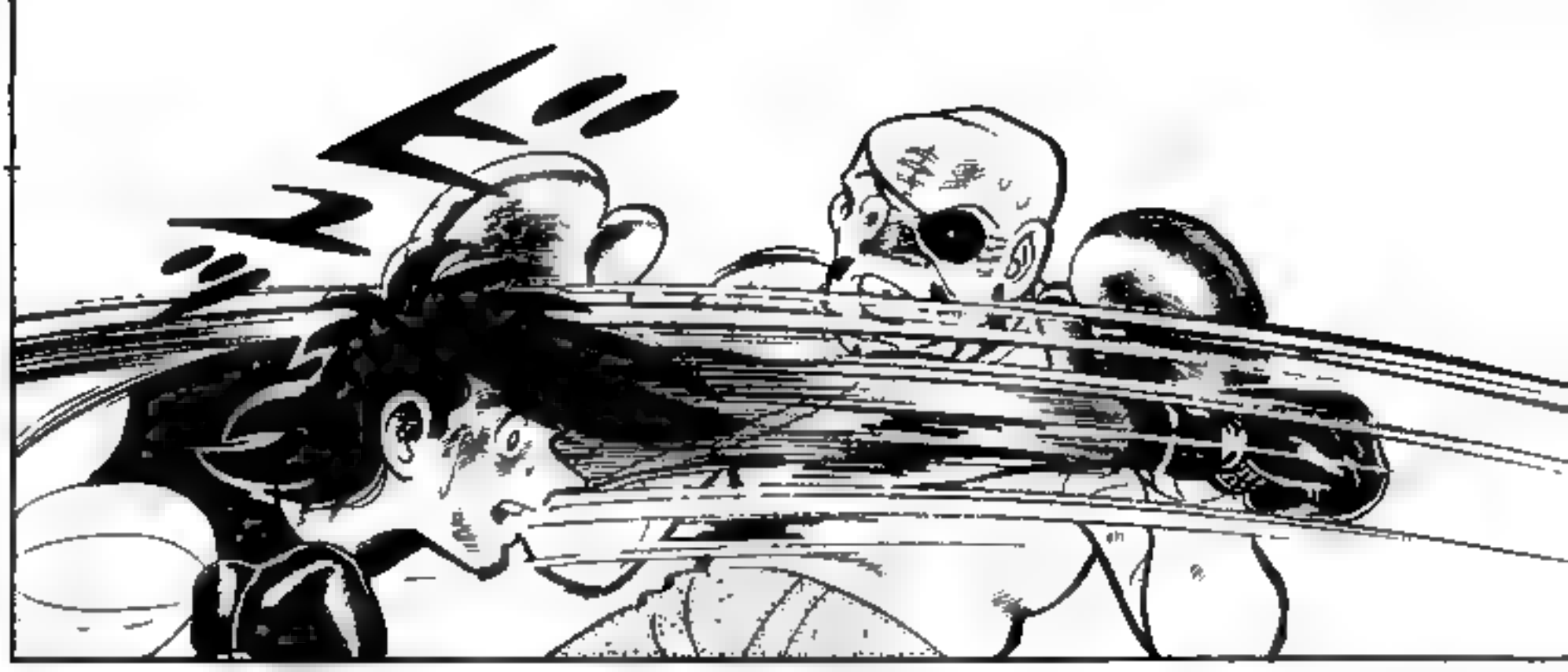
ズドン





HOLD UP A SEC...
H

WHERE ARE YOU EVEN AIMING!?
THE HELL'S THE MATTER WITH YOU!?

MAYBE IT'S 'CAUSE I WAS READING THE PAPERS IN THAT DIM ROOM BUT MY EYES ARE A BIT...

DIDN'T SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPEN BEFORE?

WAIT...

LET'S GET STARTED AGAIN.

ALRIGHT, I'M FINE NOW.

C'MON! I THOUGHT WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME!?

IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE WHO'S TIRED!

STOP BEING SUCH A WORRY-WART!

W..

UGH.

BRACE YOURSELF HARDER!

THERE'S NO TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER CRAP!

S... SOMEBODY...

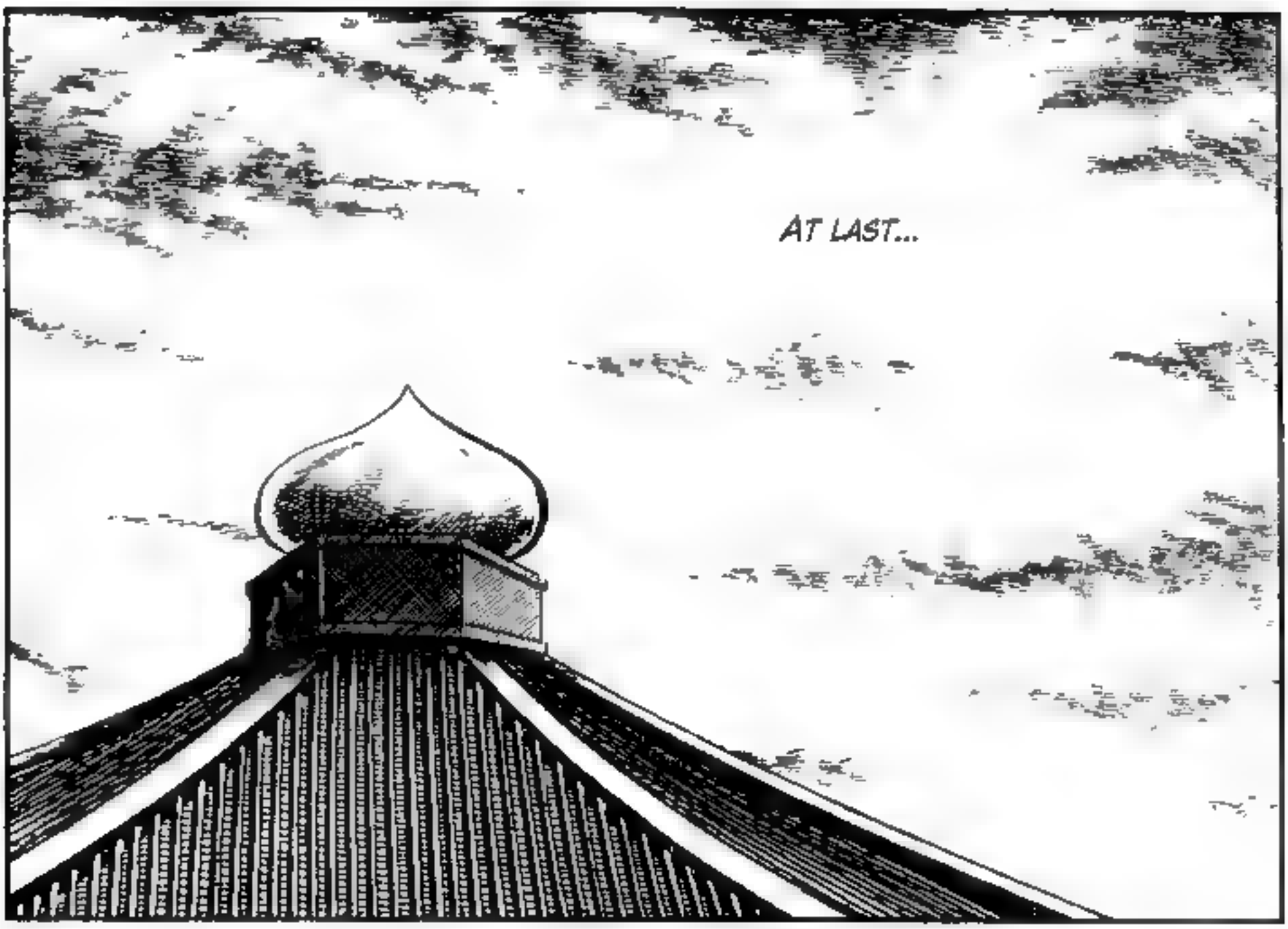
SWITCH WITH ME! I'M BEGGIN' YA!

HEY, SOME-ONE!

AGHH-

GAHH!

EEK!


AT LAST...

THE DAY OF THE MATCH HAD ARRIVED...!
MATCH OF THE CENTURY BANTAM-WEIGHT WORLD-TITLE MATCH
MENDOZA VS YABUKI

ONE HOUR BEFORE THE START OF THE MATCH, THE KITANOMARU PARK WAS ALREADY TEEMING WITH PEOPLE WAITING TO GET INSIDE NIPPON BUDOUKAN ARENA.

武道館

15 ROUND BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD-TITLE MATCH
JOSÉ MENDOZA VS. YABUKI JOE

HEY, STOP PUSHING!

I AIN'T PUSHING! IT'S THE GUY BEHIND ME, YOU DUMBASS!

PLEASE LINE UP IN DOUBLE FILE!

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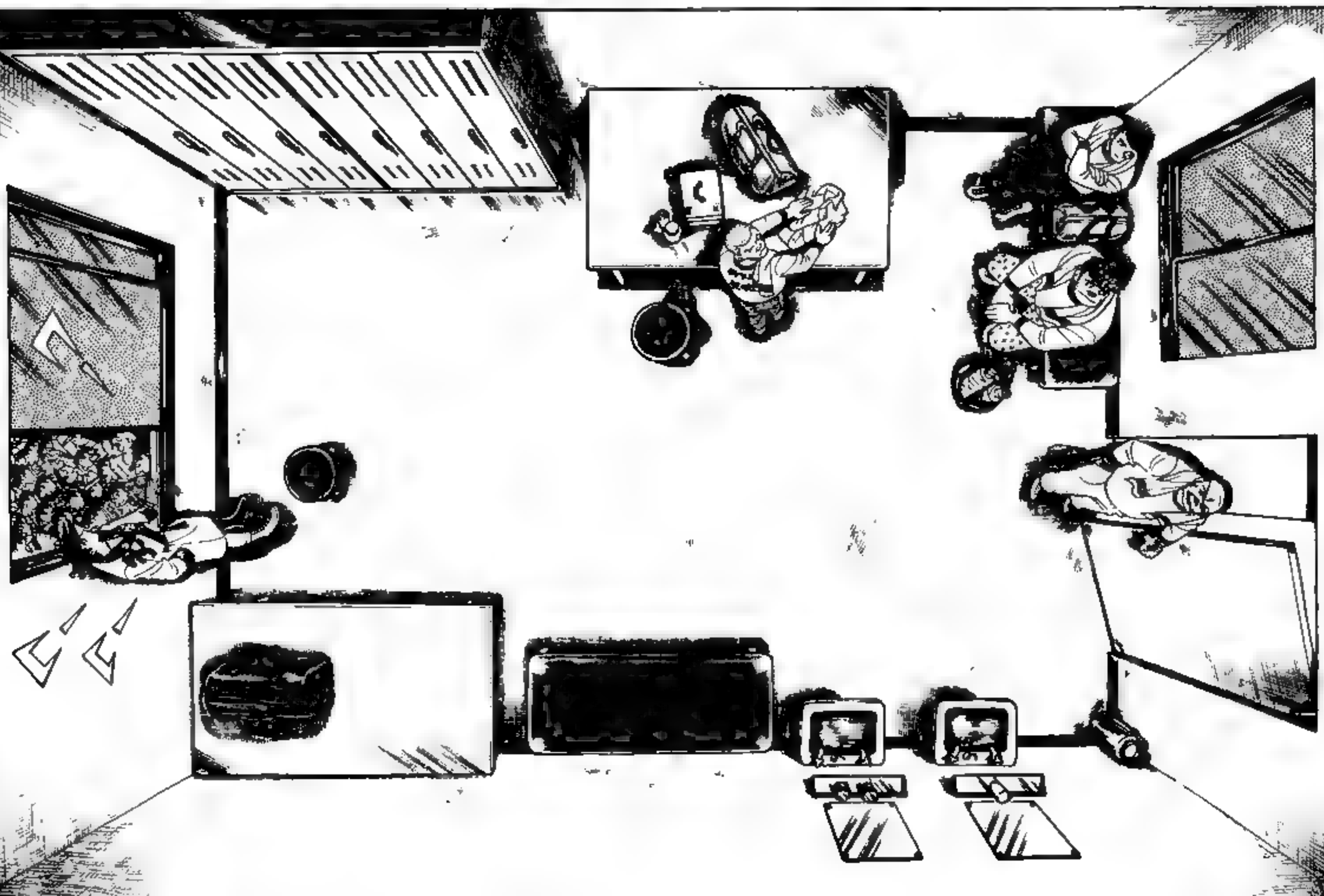

THE REPORTERS ARE ALL CROWDED OUTSIDE. THEY WANT AN INTERVIEW WITH YOU BEFORE THE MATCH...
JOE...
SORRY BUT COULD YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE...?
JOE, I SAID THE REPORTERS ARE-

YOU THREE GET OUT OF THE ROOM TOO!
HEY
S-SURE.
I'LL JUST ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS IN YOUR STEAD.

I'LL BE DOWN BY THE PLAYERS' WAITING HALL.

CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.

LET'S GO!

THE MOMENT BEFORE A MATCH CAN BE HELL ON YOUR NERVES. YOU CAN'T CALM DOWN IF THERE'S TOO MANY PEOPLE AROUND.

R-RIGHT...

Yabuki
Yabuki

BUT THE DRESSING ROOM HERE AT BUDOUKAN IS THE ONE PLACE YOU HAD TO COME TO.

YOU ESCAPED ME UNTIL NOW,

GOOD EVENING, YABUKI.

BUT TO BET ON THIS VERY LAST MOMENT.

YOU LEFT ME WITH NO CHOICE,

ﾌﾌﾌ

DON'T GO UP ON THAT RING!

YABUKI.

I HAVE AN EVEN MORE SHOCKING FACT TO TELL YOU...

AS I SAID IN MY LETTER,

SAY IT ALREADY.

WHAT'S WRONG?

THIS IS INDISPUTABLE IN THE OPINION OF DR. KEYNISKY, THE WORLD'S FOREMOST PHYSICIAN FOR BOXERS!

LATE-STAGE SYMPTOMS AT THAT, TOO...!

YOUR BODY IS ALREADY SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF PUNCH-DRUNKENNESS.

YABUKI..

SO WHAT...?

S...

SO WHAT?

YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT CARLOS.

DON'T YOU TALK ABOUT CARLOS.

IF YOU GET UP ON THE RING WITH THAT BODY, MENDOZA WILL SURELY LEAVE YOU CRIPPLED FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

YOU'LL BE REDUCED TO JUST LIKE CARLOS RIVERA!

YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT.

I WILL PAY ALL THAT IN FULL.

IN ANY CASE, TO CANCEL TONIGHT'S FIGHT JUST BEFORE IT STARTS WILL REQUIRE YOU TO PAY A LARGE FINE TO THE CHAMPION AND THE ORGANIZERS.

NO.. NEVER MIND ABOUT HIM.

HE-

Yabuki

PLEASE ANNOUNCE YOUR RETIREMENT!

SO PLEASE...

.....

BUT IT'S USELESS.
YOU'RE BABBLING ON ABOUT A WHOLE LOT..

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME, YABUKI!?

YOU'RE NOT GOING UP ON THAT RING, FULLY PREPARED TO SPEND YOUR REMAINING LIFE AS A CRIPPLE, ARE YOU...!?
Y-YOU'RE NOT...

D... DON'T TELL ME...

AFTER ALL, IT'S MY OWN BODY.
I'VE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME NOW.
HAHA... I DIDN'T NEED YOU TO COME ALL THE WAY DOWN AND WARN ME SO POLITELY.

IT DOESN'T MATTER.
EVEN IF HALF MY BODY WERE CRIPPLED AND I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE IN HELL OF WINNING,

I'VE ALREADY COME THIS FAR.
THAT'S WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER.

THAT THIS WASN'T A PLACE FOR WOMEN...

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, DIDN'T I..?

...

Y-YABUKI..!

I KNOW YOU WENT THROUGH A LOT OF TROUBLE TO TALK TO ME, BUT COULD YOU PLEASE LEAVE NOW?

WHAT, STILL GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

NO WAIT, YABUKI!

IF YOU WON'T LEAVE, THEN I WILL.

PLEASE WAIT!

P-PLEASE...

IT'S MY ONLY WISH IN MY LIFE...!

I'M BEGGING YOU... PLEASE DON'T GO UP ON THAT RING...

DIDN'T EXPECT A WOMAN LIKE YOU TO STILL HAVE TEARS.

OH...

THANKS.

I'M HONOURED.

WELL... I GUESS YOU ARE CONCERNED FOR ME.

...

WITH YOU, YABUKI!

I'M IN LOVE!

I JUST DIDN'T REALIZE IT UNTIL RECENTLY.

I LOVE YOU...

PLEASE DON'T GO UP ON THAT RING!

PLEASE... FOR MY SAKE, AT LEAST...

ONE HELL OF A SHOCKING CONFESSION.

AIN'T THIS A SHOCK?

MAN..

DO I LOOK LIKE I'M JOKING?

PLEASE BE SERIOUS, YABUKI.

WHY DON'T YOU TELL THAT TO A WOMENS' MAGAZINE?

THEY'D BUY THAT STORY FOR A HIGH PRICE, THAT'S FOR SURE.

THAT'S NOT A LINE A WOMAN SHOULD GO AROUND SAYING LIGHTLY.

GIVE IT A REST.

IT MAKES YOU LOOK CHEAP.

TO GO UP ON THAT RING, KNOWING THAT HE'S FATED TO BECOME A CRIPPLE!

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN LET THE PERSON I LOVE MOST IN THIS WORLD...

I DON'T CARE IF I LOOK CHEAP OR WHATEVER...

JOE...?

KNOCK

KNOCK

...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

OPEN UP!

HEY, JOE!

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

WHAT'RE YOU DOING? OPEN UP, JOE!

IT'S TIME TO GO!

THAT'S WHY... I'VE GOTTA GO.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MAN, JOSÉ MENDOZA, IS WAITING FOR ME ON THAT RING.

YABUKI...!

CLEANING: HAPPYSCANS
TRANSLATOR: HOX
TYPESETTERS: ARLES,
CRAZY_HORSE, NETHANDLE

あなたは、この本を読んで、どんな感想をおもちになりましたか。

このほかに、「講談社コミックス」の中で、どんな本を読まれましたか。

このつぎには、どんな作家のどんなまんがを読みたいと、お考えですか。

「読後の感想」と合わせて、左記のところあてにお知らせください。

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